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Ho! For elf-land!

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by

C 6

Alice Kingsbury.

H 6

San Francisco

1877

A.L. Bancroft

MAIN

1877

TO THOSE WHO LOVE ME

THIS

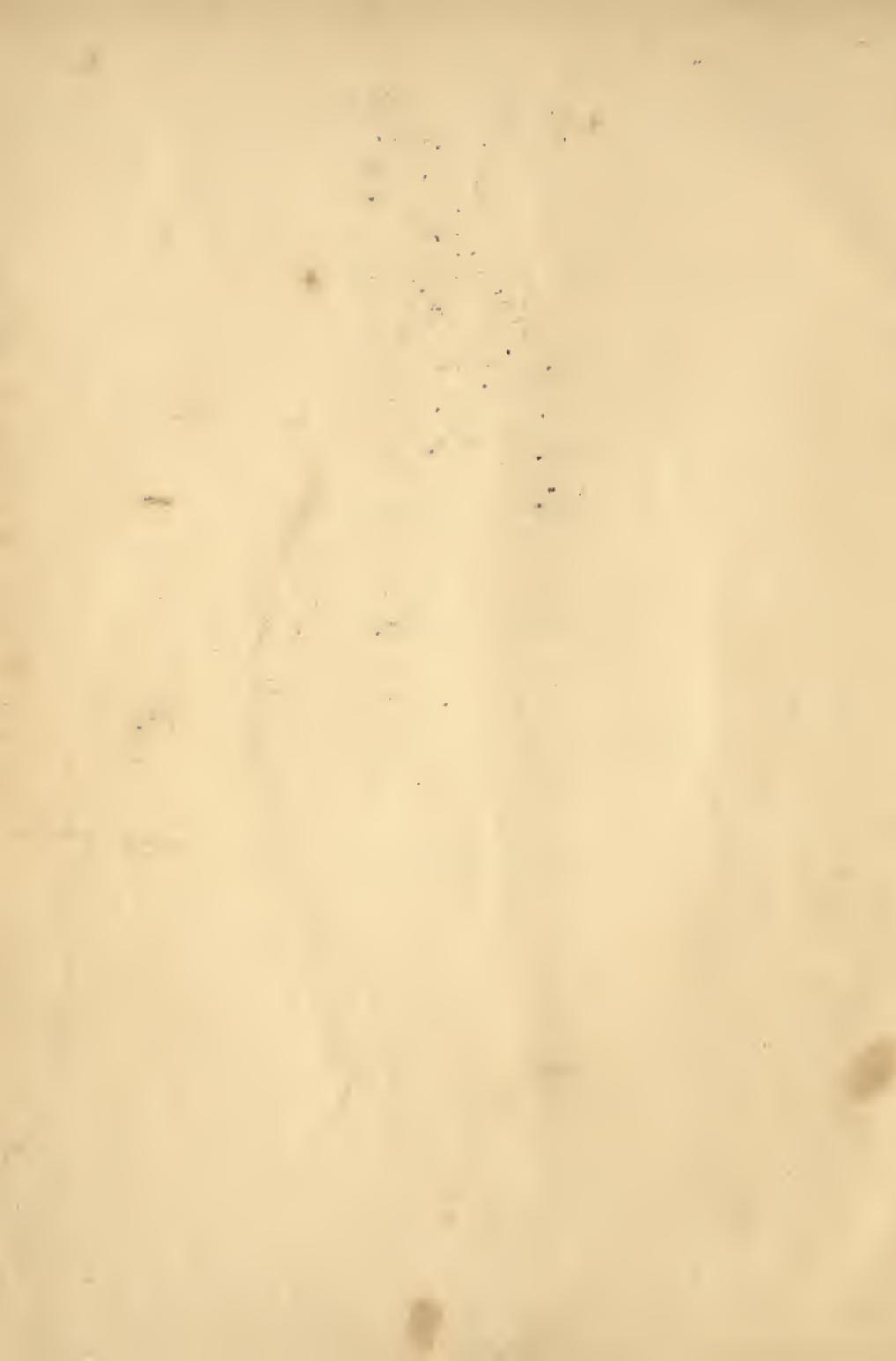
LITTLE VOLUME

IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

—

ALICE KINGSBURY.



## ALICE KINGSBURY.

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IT has often been said, that to know something of the personal biography of the author of a book is a general desire with the reader. There is much truth, doubtless, in the statement. When the public is pleased with the work, it naturally desires to know something of the source whence the entertainment emanated. With a view to gratify this general desire, a slight sketch of the author of *HO! FOR ELF-LAND!* is herewith given.

### THE ROMANCE OF THE CRICKET.

We all remember how, a little over ten years ago, a new sensation burst upon us in the advent of Alice Kingsbury, the "Elfin Star." She had sought the Golden State to find a brother long supposed to be dead, but of whom she had heard from an old California. She had made an arrangement with Mr. Maguire's agent in New York, to fill a meager engagement of ten nights, the only time then vacant. But when she arrived, the manager informed her that it was a mistake, as all the time was filled for months to come.

Lady Don was in the midst of a successful engagement ; Celeste was shortly to commence ; the great Forrest was to return. Things looked gloomy for the "Cricket," as her brother had lost nearly all his fortune by the flood and unproductive mines, and her exchequer was depleted by waiting and the necessary expenses of living. Then, too, she was in a strange land, friendless and unknown.

On the memorable night of her first appearance she arose from a sick bed with one of those fearful nervous sick-headaches. She waited, with a handkerchief saturated with chloroform bound around her head, and her heart beating fast with anxious excitement. The curtain rose; would that mass of people prove her friends or enemies ? The next few moments would decide. To quote from the *Gazette*, a popular journal at that time:

On Wednesday evening the "Elfin Star," as the bills styled Miss Alice Kingsbury, made her first appearance before a California audience, and, as is usual on such occasions, was greeted by a very full house. Miss Alice was quite a stranger to the audience. Fame had not preceded her, and no one knew that she had arrived in our midst until some time after the fact. Common consent seemed to conclude that she would not amount to much. It was announced that she would assume the *role* of "Fanchon, the Cricket," in the drama of the same title; and immediately recollections of Maggie Mitchell in that character were awakened. Fanchon burst upon the audience like a flash; completely taken by surprise, unable to appreciate the naturalness of the acting of the little witch before them, they almost refused to credit their own senses and be satisfied. They gazed on in silent wonder during the first act, and not until its close did they summon up courage and courtesy enough to give her a round or two of applause. The fact is, we have been so much accustomed to what is termed *artistic excellence*, that we have lost sight of what is entirely *artless*, unaffected and *natural*. The audience wished to see Miss Alice Kingsbury; they were at first disappointed in only seeing a little, wild, harum-scarum witch of a thing, dancing about the stage in utter disregard of all conventional rules. Consequently, when the curtain went down, critical lips were *painfully* compressed and Bohemian brows contracted; the knowing ones, with an ominous shake of the head, owl-like, muttered "Over-done, won't do." During the second act there was much of the same *effus*-like acting; yet long before its close those lips began to relax. She was creeping up to the affections of her audience, and those Bohemian brows gradually unbent, smiles of satisfaction and pleasure beamed in many an eye, and when the curtain went down on the second act it was amidst rounds of cheers and applause. But the audience was not completely vanquished—horse, foot and dragoons—until the third act. There the willful little witch makes way for the lonely little body whom nobody loves and nobody cares for; and then the little Cricket took the audience by storm, they capitulating with tears in their eyes. Yes, as a positive fact, the natural and unaffected acting of Miss Kingsbury, in this and the succeeding acts, affected her audience to tears and to laughter—just as the little Cricket determined. The magnetic attraction which she had established between herself and the audience was so great that she swayed them at will. Veteran theater-goers, who esteem their opinions as of weight if only on the score of experience, declare they never saw the equal of Fanchon on Wednesday. Admirers of Maggie Mitchell threw up the sponge with alacrity and joined in the general applause. Every action of Miss Kingsbury is suited to the momentary passion; over her beautiful and expressive face the smile chases away the tear with natural simplicity; the petulance of a spoiled child; the grief of the deserted, scorned little woman; the tenderness of the child speaking of her mother, broken by sobs which well up from her girlish bosom—were all depicted with an unusual and surprising degree of natural force and beauty. Her voice is

very sympathetic; her eye flashes with joy or hate; her figure as graceful as *petite*. Not seeking after stage effect, or a desire to swerve a moment from her *role*, she seems to forget that she is any one but Fanchon, and has the singular power of making her audience believe the same thing. The little Cricket was called before the curtain at the end of every act; at the close of the third, she responded in a few remarks, assuring her audience that "she would do her best to please them, and she had come a great many miles to do it." Why, bless her dear little heart, did she say that to dry up the tears she had caused to flow from eyes that long since were supposed to have been tearless? She could do no better; no one, not even Rachel, or Forrest as Virginius, could so move an audience as the poor little Cricket did hers on Wednesday evening. And if that is not as convincing a test as can be found, we would like to know a better.

The town went wild over that rendering of a character which, presented by her with all the earnestness, truthfulness, and utter sinking of the actress in the character presented, formed a picture on the memory of many which has not yet been effaced.

Before the expiration of the ten nights, she was re-engaged, and her popularity was sufficient to fill the theater nightly during eight weeks, to the intense delight of crowded audiences, the great advantage of the manager's receipts, and her own bank account. Then for seven weeks she met a similar success in the interior, returning to San Francisco for almost as long an engagement as before, playing Fanchon thirty-six times, also many other characters, volunteering for several charities, and not a few benefits. She bade farewell to San Francisco, leaving it as the greatest favorite that had ever appeared on its stage; as witness a few short quotations from the journals of the day:

The engagement of the Elfin Star, Alice Kingsbury, has thus far proved a triumphant success. On last Saturday evening, long before eight o'clock, a placard on which was written "House Full," was displayed for the edification of late comers.—*S. F. Leader*.

That she has become with so little apparent exertion the pet of San Francisco, and one of the greatest favorites who has ever run through a prosperous season here, is due to an indescribable charm with which Nature has endowed her, and which in much that she does transcends and replaces Art. Those of our play-goers who have not witnessed her performance of "Pauvrette" have missed a treat that occurs but seldom in a lifetime. The play, in fact, seems to have been written especially for this elfin actress, who seems to have bewitched all hearts.—*S. F. Call*.

We have nothing new to chronicle in the affairs of the Opera House—not even a shy audience or a vacant seat to note. Great is Kingsbury, wonderful her success, and immense the profit of manager Maguire.—*S. F. Sunday Mercury.*

No other engagement has equaled this lady's, either in the continued crowded houses she has drawn, or the overflowing treasury, or the complete satisfaction and delight that all her personations have afforded to one thousand people each night during four successive weeks.—*California Leader.*

This young lady may feel proud of her triumph—for it is a triumph unequalled in the theatrical annals of the Pacific Coast.—*California Gazette.*

Returning to the eastern states she was shortly afterward married to Brevet Lieut-Col. F. M. Cooley, then a Captain in the regular army, commanding the post at Natchez, Miss., where they lived very happily, raising a family of bright little ones to render home still more attractive. The "Cricket" is now a resident with us, turning her attention to literature and the fine arts, occasionally appearing before the public, and renewing her triumphs of old. Mrs. Cooley in private life is known as a good wife and mother, and a kind and faithful friend.

FRANK SOULE.

# HO! FOR ELF-LAND!

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A LITTLE GIRL WHOSE WISHES WERE GRANTED.



NCE upon a time, in a very old-fashioned village, and in a very old-fashioned house, there lived a little girl.

One cold winter's night, she was sitting by the fire with her mother, who had been telling her all sorts of stories to make home attractive and to be remembered when she should grow up, and perhaps be far away, when the little girl suddenly said:

“Mamma, I wish I could have all my wishes granted.”

“Ah! Maudie, remember the black pudding.”

“Why, mamma, do you think I would be so foolish as to wish for such a thing? With only three wishes too!”

“Let me hear what would be some of your first wise wishes, daughter.”

“Oh, I would wish—oh, I would wish—let me see, what would I wish?” Her mother laughed heartily.

“Oh, I thought your wishes were so many, and so urgent, that you could name fifty at least, without stopping.”

“Well, I would wish that—that I would never have to have a tooth pulled; and then—then I would wish never to have chilblains. Ugh! don't they hurt now?” and she rubbed her feet together, till you would think she had worn holes in her shoes.

“Well, your wishes are not very extravagant!”

“Oh! but I would wish much more. To be very wise—”

“What! without studying?”

“Of course, or what would be the use of having your wishes granted! Any body can be wise by studying. Then I’d wish to be very beautiful—much prettier than I am now.”

“Oh! you think you are pretty, do you?”

“Well, mamma, I ain’t as ugly as Mollie Lynx, and I’m not freckled and got red hair;” but her mamma’s remark had rather abashed her, so she continued, hesitatingly, “and—and I would like a new pink dress.”

It seemed to grow colder, and the wind whistled around the house, so they drew nearer to the fire, and Maudie laid her head on her mamma’s lap, and looked dreamily into the red coals.

“Mamma, I can see ever so many pretty things in the fire. See! doesn’t that look like a dear little fairy?”

But her mamma was thinking of days long gone by when her hair was caressed by a loving hand, and the fire made pictures for her, too. But the door suddenly blew open and made them shiver with the cold.

“Run, Maudie, quick, and shut the door.”

“Why, ma, I—”

“Surely, you are not afraid? Oh, fie!”

“I don’t like to be jumping up so often, when I am so comfortable.”

“Why, Maudie! Shut the door when you are told.”

“Humph! I wish there weren’t any doors in the world.”

No sooner had the words escaped her lips, than a most terrible crash startled them. Maudie shrieked and hid her head in her mother’s dress, thinking a thunderbolt had struck the house, and they would soon be crushed beneath the ruins. But it was only the doors that had all fallen down and broken into splinters, fit only for kindling wood.

"Oh, mamma, what is the matter? Is it a hurricane? See! the very doors of the cupboard are broken to pieces, too!"

The wind rushed in and blew the smoke from the chimney, till it nearly blinded them, so the fire had to be put out. It was too late to get a carpenter to put up new doors, and they hadn't a man in the house to protect them; so they called up the little maid-of-all-work, unchained the big dog, and all four determined to keep watch till the day dawned. But it got so cold, that they were glad to go to bed, letting the little maid sleep at the foot, and the big dog on the hearth-rug, with a blanket thrown over him.

When daylight came, her mamma hurried to the nearest carpenter and told him she wanted ten doors put up immediately.

"Ten doors! Why, ma'am, I've orders for a hundred already this morning, and I got all my apprentices and any man that can plane a board and drive a nail straight working for me. Can't possibly do them till next week."

She went to all the carpenters in the village and received the same answer. What could have ailed all the doors? And what was stranger still, as soon as a new door was put up, down it fell, and was shivered to pieces.

So her mamma went home and hung up blankets and pieces of carpets; anything to keep some of the wind out. And how funny the village looked with carpets all colors of the rainbow flapping from the doorways! So it was for a week, and the village was full of carpenters from the surrounding towns, who were all busy making iron-bound doors, doors studded with great brass knobs, every kind of door they thought wouldn't break.

One day Maudie said, "Oh, dear! I'm so tired of the cold

and the old flapping carpets, that I would like any kind of doors, even made of the roughest old boards; I wish we all had doors of some kind or another, that would keep the cold out." Soon they began to feel warmer, and quickly discovered the cause; some hideous old boards in the form of a door guarded the entrance.

"Oh, mamma! Oughtn't the carpenter be ashamed to put up such a door as that?" But a loud rap caused them to open it.

"I come to put up them doors."

"You're too late."

"D'ye call that a door?" and the man turned away laughing ironically. Twenty times that day rap! rap! went the door, and twenty times they opened it to men who had been sent to put up those doors; so to escape the annoyance they took a walk in the village, and such doors greeted them! Red, blue, green, and yellow doors, glass, iron, and doors of one hundred years ago.

Soon Maudie's mother had the doors planed and painted, so they were quite satisfied.

One day her mamma bought Maudie a beautiful new dress, the very pink one she had thought of wishing for. It fitted her so nicely with the little jacket and "pull-back"—though the village was old-fashioned, the young people were not. It was all finished but the frill for the neck.

"Maudie, you must hem this; for little girls cannot learn too early to make their own dresses; it's a great accomplishment."

So Maudie eagerly took the frill, and hemmed diligently for just five minutes, then she stuck her finger. "Oh, dear!" she sighed, and for the next five minutes she kept her finger in





her mouth; then she sewed for three minutes. "I think I'll rest a little now," she said, laying the frill upon a chair.

"No, you must finish it, for I wish to put the dress away."

"Oh, dear!" she said, and sat down with an impatient thump; but she got up with a little scream, quicker than she sat down. Looking very cross, she threw the frill on the floor, exclaiming:

"I wish all the new dresses were in Jericho!" The sky suddenly became darkened as if by a terrible storm, and a shriek by five hundred female voices rent the air. They rushed to the window to see what was the matter, just in time to see the beautiful pink dress fly out of the window and join the army of rustling garments. Ten hundred hands were stretched heavenward, but in vain; the dresses stopped or stayed not, but fled over hills, valleys, rivers, mountains, cities and plains, the wonder and terror of the inhabitants, who thought an army of ghostly, headless women were flying in the sky.

The village soon appeared to have suffered some calamity, for nearly every house was closed, and within sat weeping women, who would not be comforted.

The churches for several Sundays were deserted, save by the old people and the children, till the young girls could make over their old dresses, their new ones having gone to Jericho.

The female Jerichoans were surprised, delighted, enraptured at this harvest of dresses, and had they been barbarians, it would have done more to civilize them than all the missionaries; for who could remain a savage with a "pull-back" on?

When the spring-time came Maudie's mamma gave her a birthday party, and made her such a pretty white dress; but it was not quite finished in time, so the waist and skirt had to be pinned on.

How beautiful the little girls looked in their pink, white and blue dresses, with broad sashes, and their gold and silver shoes! and the little boys were model beaux. They had played every conceivable game, both in doors and out, and it was getting near sunset and supper time; so they were having the last dance on the green before going into the house; and you should see the airs and graces those little misses put on. The dance ended with a grand promenade, and as Maudie's partner put his arm around her waist, one of the treacherous pins pierced his hand. He withdrew his arm quickly, with a little "Oh!" and there the blood was running from his finger.

"Oh, the mean, wicked pin! I'm so sorry!" cried Maudie, binding it up with her tiny lace handkerchief. "Oh, I—I wish there wasn't a pin in the world!"

What was the matter with the girls! Were they taken suddenly ill? Some grasped their dresses with both hands, and ran for their homes, without even saying good-by; some rushed to the parlor, some to the bedroom, some to the greenhouse, and some stood still in horror and surprise.

The lawn looked as if it was turned into a dress-maker's store; there were skirts with beautiful embroidery, skirts with tiny tucks, with insertion, tatting, crochet, and some with plain hems, sashes, flowers, ribbons, ruffs, and must it be confessed? one pair of pantalettes; the little girl who owned them had been too lazy to sew on a button.

How mortified Maudie was, standing there in the waist of her dress, the skirt dangling about her feet.

There was no more party that day, and the nice little supper was prepared in vain. Strange to say, only the little girls who had the finest clothes, came after them; the others would not acknowledge having lost a thing; especially if there was

a rent in the skirt, or the embroidery was torn. And Maudie was a miserable little girl for just three days; she couldn't be unhappy any longer, for she was going to a picnic, and had such a pretty pair of new shoes; and as her feet were small, she was anxious to show them. She was so happy that morning; obedient to her mamma, and pleasant and obliging to every one; but when she put on her shoes, oh, horror! they were too small. But she determined to wear them anyhow; they were so nice, and would be sure to stretch all right, for they were made to order. They had to walk down a little hill to join the others, for they lived on the edge of the village, and every step was a pain to poor Maudie.

"Oh! dear! Mamma, isn't it too bad! they do hurt so, that I wish the old shoemaker had one of them choking him!"

The next moment she stepped on a nettle, and screaming with pain, she looked down at her foot, and behold it was minus a shoe! and running toward them, was the poor shoemaker gasping and choking with Maudie's shoe in his mouth! She rushed to him, and pulling it with all her force, out it came, and she fell one way, he the other. When they got up, he said:

"Oh, Miss, how could you kick your shoe so far?" but she quickly put it on, and did not say a word. They came to a little puddle of water, and Maudie put both her feet into it.

"Ah! that helps right away," she said, and walked on more cheerfully. They soon joined the others, and laughing and shouting they crowded into the large, gaily-decked wagon, and rode to the picnic grounds. We all know what a picnic is, and this was like those we enjoyed years ago, and remember so well to this day.

The trees were so tall and the swings were so high that Maudie said it was delightful, just like going up in a balloon.

“Push harder, Hoddie; swing me just as high as you can. I wish I could swing up to the moon.” Hoddie must have obeyed her, for she had never swung so high before in all her life. Why, she was still going up, and up, and up. What could Hoddie mean? Soon it became dark, and the stars shone. While she was wondering what it all meant, she came plump up against the moon. The seat of the swing struck the door so hard that the man in the moon came out and asked her what she wanted there.

“If you please, sir, I’m at a picnic, and they swung me so high, that I accidentally struck your door; but now I am here, won’t you please be kind enough to show me your country?” She spoke so pleasantly that the little man in the moon consented, and taking her hand, he led her into his house to rest a bit. But the atmosphere was so light that she soon became light-headed.

“Oh, dear! I hope I’m not going to become a luna—something, for that’s the way the moon affects some people.”

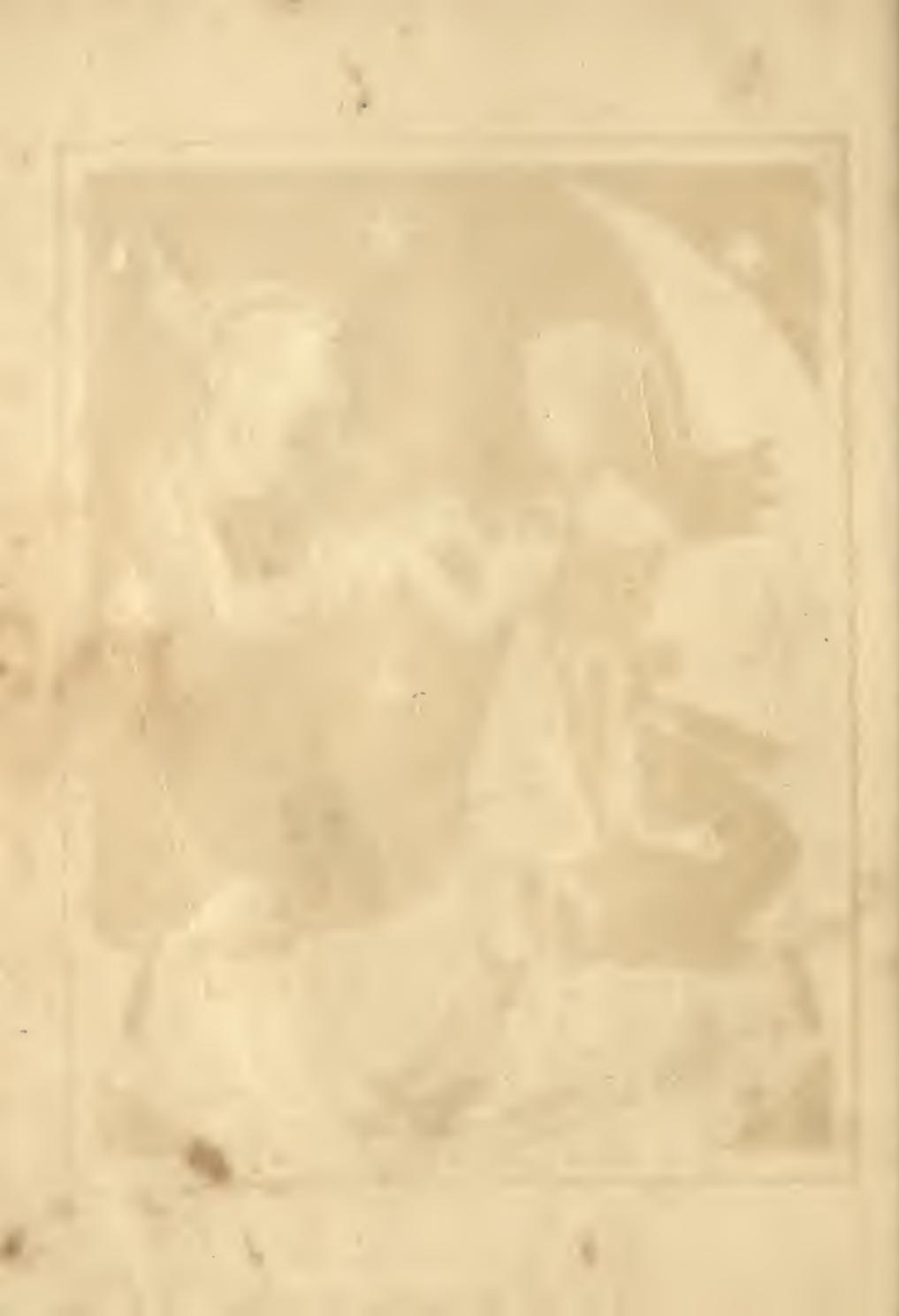
“Here, take a drop of fermented moonbeams; that’ll make you all right,” and the little man gave her a crystal goblet, filled with a clear, transparent, yellow liquid. She tasted it, then she drank a little, then a little more, till she had drained it to the bottom. Oh! how jolly she did feel!

“Say, little man in the moon, do you ever dance?” then seizing him by both hands, she danced and laughed till her feet felt ready to fall off; the little man danced, too, and such a time as they did have! She could not stop laughing and dancing till she dropped on the floor exhausted.

“Is this what the gentlemen drink, that makes them moon-blind?” she said, “for I can’t see anything now.”

The little man laughed heartily. “Oh, ho!” he said, “you





are cunning." Then he went out and got a bucketful of unfermented moonbeams and threw over her. Soon she was all right again, but too tired to climb the mountains; so she asked if he couldn't send her home, as her mother would be very anxious about her.

"Yes, go home on your swing; you see it has caught on to the horn of my moon."

"Oh, dear, no! I couldn't possibly go that way again. It frightens me to think of it! Imagine with what a thump I might strike the earth!"

"Oh! you live on the earth, do you; that mean little ball that gets so often between me and the bright sun, and casts me completely in the shade? I've a good mind to pitch you into space, so there'll be one less to obstruct the light. He caught hold of her so fiercely and looked so cross, that he nearly frightened her out of her wits.

"Oh, please, good man in the moon, don't, and I'll never get in your light again. I'll get under a tree, or in the shade, or go to bed! Oh, please send me home some other way! How do you leave here, when you go away?"

"Oh, I ride on a moon-beam!"

"Oh! that would be splendid! Please let me!"

"How could you? Look at my breeches! There's fifty separate seats of buckskins sewed in them."

"Well, can't you lend me a pair?"

"You'd look a pretty sight! besides I've only got an old pair with the seats all worn out, but if you can sew in the others you are welcome to them, but you must leave me your dress and skirts in exchange!"

So Maudie sat and sewed, and sewed, and sewed, and when she had put in forty seats, with many sighs and groans, for

she did not like sewing at all, she asked if that would not do, as she weighed so much less than he did.

“You can try,” he said; “go into that room and change.”

What a sight she came out! Her little sack covered her body, and those hideous forty-seated breeches her pretty little legs.

“Oh, dear! I’m a little afraid to attempt it,” she said, as he led her to a straight, bright moon-beam, that stretched so far ahead that she could not see the end of it.

“Well, try the swing, then.”

“No; I won’t do that, but I’ve an idea; can’t I hold on to the seat? and as it is loose on the rope, it will slide down easily, if you tie that tight to the horn, so I shall feel quite nicely.” He did as she said; then she thanked him kindly, and asked him to call, the next time he visited the earth, and bidding him good-bye, she started.

Whew! how fast she went!

“There’s four seats worn through already!” she said.

“Oh, good gracious! there’s a dozen more gone! there’ll be two of me, when I reach home!”

Down she went, faster and faster. It nearly took away her breath, and she tried to think how many of the seats were left; but she reached the earth with such force, as the thirty-ninth was cut through, that she knew no more, till she felt her mother bathing her face, and asking how in the world she got into the back-yard in that terrible shape.

She told her mother everything, and she felt so sorry for her, and wrapping her in a blanket, she gave her a cup of hot tea, and put her to bed. In the morning she was all right, and looked upon her adventure with a great deal of satisfaction. She was always talking of her visit to the moon, till the people began to think her a little “loony.”

One day she was going with her mother out visiting, so she

wanted to look extra nice. She had beautiful curly blonde hair, and she was combing it into ringlets, when her mamma told her to hurry, or they would be late, and as we all know hurrying is a very poor way to make haste to do one's hair, it knotted and tangled, and she became furious.

"Oh, dear! don't I wish my hair was as straight as a poker!" she cried petulantly. The comb went through it now so smoothly and quickly that she was delighted, and ran to the glass to brush it around the curling-stick; but what was her horror to find that with all the brushing it remained as straight as a poker.

"Oh, dear mamma!" she said in terror, "I believe some fairy has been granting all my wishes. Oh, dear! I wish she wouldn't do so any more!"

Her mother laughed, and said, "Well, we must make haste. Why, your hair is not done yet!"

"I just wished it was as straight as a poker, and I can't curl it now one bit; I've wished the fairy wouldn't do so any more, and forgot to wish first that my hair would curl again. Oh, dear! oh, dear! what shall I do?"

"Where's the wisdom, beauty, and other good things you were going to wish for?"

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" she moaned, rocking herself disconsolately.

"Ah, Maudie, I think you have made a worse bargain than the poor woman who wished for the black pudding."

"Oh! mamma; to think I might have been the handsomest person in the world, and you the richest, and both of us wise—but you are wise anyhow; then I might have had—O! O! O-o-o!" and she burst out crying like a spoiled child. "And to think, all I've got for my wishes is, to lose my pretty pink dress, and have hair as straight as a poker!"

## NAUGHTY TOMMY.



TOMMY was not a good little boy; in fact he did not like good little boys; he had heard too much of them, yet he had never known but one, and that was Jim Smith's little boy, who always had a cold in his head, and spoke through his "dose."

Tommy's father was convivial and his mother was scientific. She initiated him into the mysteries of volcanos, earthquakes, tidal waves and the like; and his father introduced him to the soothing pastime of casino, and allowed him to watch the concocting of a milk-punch or a hot whisky; so when Tommy was six years old, his education was pretty far advanced. Tommy had a Websterian head, and whenever there was a door to be bumped, or a corner to be encountered, that head did it forcibly; and in the trifling events of falls from trees, ladders, barns, etc., that head always came first in contact with the earth. Yet Tommy was pretty well satisfied with this world as it is, and enjoyed the good things of life to the uttermost, except when he had bitter medicine to take; then he wished that he was in his grave, or that his life was ended. His father used to smile at the learned way he expressed himself, but his mother said it was from hearing refined language used at home—the little swear words he heard occasionally from his father, she passed over in dignified silence.

One day Tommy went with his parents to a grand picnic; how he did enjoy himself.

“Mamma,” he said, “the ice cream, cakes and lemonade are delicious. I don’t care for the ordinary food, chickens and that, for I can get plenty at home.” The mother remembered with half a sigh that her cake was not always a success, owing, no doubt, to the non-risibility of the yeast, or the condition of the stove, so she told him not to eat too much, but to act like a gentleman in everything.

He liked to attract attention, as all children do, who are considered smart by their indulgent parents, so had spoken his two little pieces half a dozen times, till even the praise became monotonous, then he sought his father.

“Papa, please give me a swing in that little boat, just as high as you can, please.” So his papa put him in, with another little boy on the opposite seat, and swung them gently.

“Oh, higher, higher, please!” they both cried, and seeing they stood it so well, he swung them higher. Still they cried: “Higher! higher!” and he pushed them harder. All at once Tommy pitched from the seat and struck his head on the floor of the swing; but he did not stop there; his head went through the boards, his body following, then into the earth, oh, ever so far.

Was he never going to stop? It seemed as if he had gone a thousand miles, and yet he continued going. Suddenly he landed flat on his back on a stream of molten fire.

“Ah!” he thought, “I’m in the centre of the earth, and this is the subterranean fire mamma told me about, that makes the volcanos. Oh, my! I wonder if this is a stream of lava on its way to Vesuvius?” He remembered how his mother had told him of the burying of Pompeii, and how he had tried to imitate the eruption of a volcano, by climbing on the ash barrel, and scattering the contents over the back-yard, much to

the annoyance of Bridget, who threatened to pull his ears, but never did, as his mamma had explained to her that he was of a scientific turn of mind.

How hot his back was, and how fast he was going! He passed by several little Brownies at work. What could they be digging so eagerly?

“Say, Mr. Brownies,” he called out, “if you are digging gold, just pitch me a piece or two; but pitch straight, as I’m traveling pretty lively.” The Brownies laughed like so many metal bells ringing, and sent a shower of gold flying after him; but as several pieces hit his head, it was no great pleasure after all, and he indulged in an expression he had learned on the streets, but would not for anything have uttered within reach of the refined ears of his mamma.

“Oh, cheese it, Brownies!” and stretching out his hand to defend himself he caught a good-sized lump of the yellow metal, and quickly put it in his pocket. Chuckling to himself, he thought:

“This is worth ever so many cracks on the head, and what a lot of things I can buy with it; a velocipede, a fiddle, a drum, a—.” But he was going so swift, and his back was getting so hot, that he thought no more of toys. Every little while he passed other groups of Brownies at work, but was afraid to halloo out to them, yet wanted to ever so much, thinking they might be digging diamonds or rubies. Oh, dear! he was nearing the volcano, he knew, for such mean, ugly gases he had never smelt before. Now he passed rapidly through great arched caves where the molten fire was bubbling and seething as in a cauldron; then he went up an inclined plane, at an angle of he didn’t know how many degrees; then the gases were worse than ever, and he was





whirled round and round; then shot up five thousand four hundred and fifty feet straight into the sky; but he came down so rapidly, and with such a thump, that he opened his eyes in terror, and there was his mamma and papa bending over him, looking so sorry and holding a nasty bottle of hartshorn to his nose, and rubbing his back, and slapping his hands, and:

“ Halloa! Tommy, are you all right now? ” And his father took him in his arms, and his mother kissed him; and he told them where he had been, and felt in his pocket for the nugget of gold, but was very much surprised to find nothing there, and to hear that he had been insensible. The rest of the picnic passed off quietly; but he did not get over his disappointment at not finding the gold, it had all been so real.

Not many days after the picnic, he was flying his kite; a beautiful affair, he thought, that his mother had made for him, with a big red rose painted in the center, and a fierce-looking eagle at the top, and little pictures all around. His mother had told him all about Benjamin Franklin, and he thought, perhaps, if he got on the barn the kite would be so much higher, that he might touch off a little cloud all by himself.

“ And become as great a fellow as old Ben! ” he said, half sarcastically, as he climbed with great difficulty to the roof of the barn, with the string of the kite held by his teeth! How nice it was up there! He could see so far, and the sun was so bright, and the kite went so high! But looking at it, he forgot where he was, backed off the edge of the roof and fell plump into the horse-trough! It was full of water, but he didn’t stop there, but went clear through horse-trough, earth and everything, till he came out the other side of the world into the Pacific Ocean.

“ Oh, good gracious! now I shall get drowned!” he thought, “ and what will mamma say?” But it was the time of the great tidal wave, and in a moment he found himself swashing along at a tremendous rate; and how the fishes looked at him! They frightened him with their cold expressionless eyes. A harmless little sword-fish came too near, and Tommy thought his leg was sawed off; he hastily felt of it, but all was right, only his boot was rasped nearly through. Then the devil-fish stretched out his long arms and said:

“ Come, little earth boy, come with me,” and smiled in such an insinuating way, that Tommy felt his hair stand on end, and his flesh creep, yet he managed to say:

“ No, thank you, Mr. Devil-fish!” he thought it the best policy to be polite; “ I’m on a journey and can’t stop.” Then he rushed over great beds of coral, and how they did scratch his back.

“ I don’t see what mamma wants to read ‘ The Wonders of the Deep’ for; I think they are horrible. I’ll tell her all about them real, when I get home.” Then it suddenly occurred to him he might never get home again, and it gave him a cold shiver, colder even than the water.

“ Mamma ’ll call ‘ Tommy! Tommy! ’ and when I don’t come, then papa ’ll go and look for me, and when he doesn’t find me, he’ll get the bell man to cry: ‘ Oh, yes! oh, yes! little boy lost!’ ” Then he felt like crying, to think how badly mamma and papa would feel. Now he passed through a school of porpoises, but they appeared more frightened at seeing such a strange fish as he, than he at seeing them.

“ Pshaw! I don’t believe they are somebody’s brothers, or they would not have run away so.”

But looking up he saw in the distance an island, and tower-

ing above it, a volcano. "Oh, good gracious! now I am in bad luck, for I really believe that is the Sandwich Island, where mamma told me they ate Captain Cook—wonder if they ate him because of his name? I do wish a whale would swallow me—a friendly whale—as he did Jonah; then I would have a chance of being thrown up somewhere; but if the savages over there cook and eat me, I stand no chance of being gathered up again. Oh, dear! I wish a whale would come!" By this time he was swept on to the shore of those islands he so dreaded, but the big wave, receding, threw him clear down the throat of an advancing whale. How glad he was!

"It's fortunate a whale has no teeth except those two he don't use, or he might have bitten me in two; but here I am in a safe place and quite warm." Then he examined the whale's internal arrangements and where the blubber was they made oil out of, and what they called little boys when they cried too much.

"And where are the bones they make umbrellas and corsets of, especially that front piece that mamma uses sometimes on my—back?" But the whale feeling such a queer disturbance, turned about and caught the tidal wave as it was rushing back to the Pacific Slope, and in a short time Tommy could see through the whale's open mouth the beautiful Golden Gate.

"Now I shall see California, that I've heard so much about. I hope we'll go down a mine, so that I can dig some gold; I'd give mamma a piece for Christmas." Then they passed Seal Rock, and Tommy laughed with delight at the gambols of the lively seals.

"I'd like to catch one, and put it under mamma's pillow Christmas Eve, for her to make into a sack," he thought; but

here the whale closed his mouth and dashed with the big wave up an elegant street, up, up into a room on the second floor, and wishing to relieve his domestic economy of the disagreeable disturbance, opened his mouth wide, contracted his internal muscles, and Tommy was landed on the floor in the midst of a crowd of excited women.

“I want fifty Panther!” one shouted.

“I’ll take one hundred Leopard!” screamed another.

“Forty Lady Bryan?” hallooed a third. Drops of perspiration stood on Tommy’s noble brow.

“Where am I? Are these Comanche female Indians, or Sioux, or what, that they want those ferocious animals, and are they going to eat those forty poor ladies! Ugh! I wish I was home.”

But here arose such a hubbub that the head lady, who had a little wooden hammer in her hand, mistook that Websterian head for the table, and shouting: “Order! order! ladies!” gave it several sharp raps, and Tommy opened his eyes to find William, the coachman, rolling him on the grass, and slapping his back, and pressing his lungs, and doing all he could to bring him to. It all flashed on his mind at once.

“Oh, plēase, William, don’t tell mamma; it’ll frighten her so.” Then he told him of the adventures he had had, and how they were most as good as real.

When he saw his mother he threw his arms around her neck, and was unusually affectionate.

“Oh, dear mamma! I wish I could have got you a seal.”

“A what?” she asked.

“Oh! ah! nothing,” he replied, remembering himself. But every little while he would forget and speak of the devil-fish, and the insides of a whale, and how the women wanted to buy

panthers, till his mother thought something was the matter with him.

"Put out your tongue, Tommy. I'm afraid you have a fever, and that I must send for a doctor."

But this meant medicine, perhaps bitter medicine, so Tommy made a clean breast of it, from the fall into the horse-trough to the raps on his head by the woman with the hammer. Of course his mother counseled him about being more careful and all that, and of course he said he would, or at least he would try.

One day, some time after all this happened, Tommy's father had company, and the wine was set on the table; the gentlemen were good natured and lively, and Tommy listened in silence to the funny anecdotes and adventures they related; and as the wine diminished, their liveliness increased, and soon Tommy was laughing as appreciatively as the rest of them. He had never seen his father so funny before, and when the champagne was opened, that gentleman made a speech, addressing the decanter as "Mr. President." It was the droll-est speech that ever was heard, and Tommy laughed till he cried, and the gentlemen applauded with hands and feet, then lit their cigars and strolled into the garden; but Tommy remained in the room and ruminated.

"Now, if what's in those bottles makes papa so funny, what would it do to me?" Then he sipped the "heel taps" from all the glasses, and thought it wasn't so very nice, and wondered why the gentlemen thought so much about champagne suppers; then he concluded he'd try the contents of the decanter.

"Ah! this is nice and sweet; I rather like it;" and he took a long sip; this made him feel so good that he took another, then another.

“ How queer my head feels; it’s—it’s swimming. Goodness sow thith room—room—movthes! Ah! thith is jolly!” and he hallooed and laughed, and almost danced a jig; then he went to the decanter again, and tipped it, and tipped it, till he had to fall on his knees to get any of its contents. At last he tipped the decanter so far that his head went into it, and his body followed; then he wondered how that small bottle could hold such a large boy. He was floating in the wine like a little fish, when he suddenly caught sight of himself reflected in the glass of the decanter. Oh, horror! he was changed into a little imp or devil! There were two tiny horns growing out of his head, and his feet were hoofs and the nails of his hands claws.

“ Now what will mamma say? She can’t call ‘ come here, little Tommy,’ any more, but ‘ come, you little devil,’ like Mrs. Jones calls her boy. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I wish I had remembered, ‘ Touch not, taste not, handle not.’ What an example I’ll be to all bad boys! I shouldn’t wonder if they preserved me in whisky and showed me at Sunday school; and Christmas is to-morrow, and we’re to have a tree, and papa promised me a velocipede, and mamma a—. But I shall never be able to play any more, for the boys would be scared of me, and run away. Oh, dear! oh, dear! I wish I had been a good boy.”

Then he wondered why the wine didn’t drown him, and if he made ever so many promises to himself of reformation, if he would return to his natural shape; so he made the promises and waited; but still a little imp grinned and mouthed at him from the glass, and he almost wished he was dead and in his grave.

The gentlemen returned, and his father asked them to join





him in a glass of wine. Oh, how Tommy clung, with horns and hoofs, to the side of the decanter, for fear some one would pour him out and swallow him. But after all the gentlemen were helped, his father emptied the decanter into his glass.

“Here’s how!” they all said, and the glasses were raised; but Tommy gave such a terrific shriek as his father’s teeth scratched his back, that he dropped him on the floor in terror, the glass and wine falling on him and cutting him so bad, that he hallooed:

“Oh, mamma! mamma! I’m nearly killed!” and rubbing his eyes he looked around wildly; but there were all the gentlemen laughing at him, and one of them said:

“Hallo! Tommy, you’re drunk, you little rascal.”

Then papa examined the decanter and found it empty; then he looked severe at Tommy, and was about to order him to bed, when the gentlemen interceded for him, and Tommy said :

“Don’t be afraid, papa; I don’t touch nasty wine any more.” Then he related all he had suffered, and involuntarily felt his head, but that Websterian organ was the same as ever.

His father thought that perhaps after all it was a good lesson, and Tommy couldn’t see anything funny in what was said the rest of that day, so left the parlor in disgust and joined his mamma, who would not take a milk-punch even on Christmas day; and Tommy tried not to be naughty any more.

## THE LEAF AND THE BUSH.



NCE upon a time, in the early spring, the trees were all out in little green leaves, and the grass had bladed so green and slender that they looked like little fairy lances; the song of the birds was joyous, and everything seemed living in perfect happiness. The leaves and grass drank the dew at night; it supplied their simple wants, and that contented them.

But now the heat grew stronger and baked the earth, so that the dew could not feed the grass and leaves, as it had done before; so they began to murmur; still the sun grew hotter and hotter.

“Oh! if it would only rain!” cried the young leaves.

“Oh! yes,” said the grass.

But the sky was as blue and bright as a lady’s eye.

“See, how our beautiful dresses are fading,” murmured the leaves, “all for the want of a little paltry rain.”

“It’s no use to complain, dear sisters, the rain will not come any sooner for it,” said one of last year’s leaves, that still clung to the top of the tree; it was scarcely a leaf, though, but a little two-winged seed-pod.

“How she talks, the old maid!” snapped one of the greenest and prettiest of the leaves. “Of course the rain wouldn’t brighten her coat, or make her chances better, so she can sit calm and content, and watch our beauty fade.”

"Indeed, dear sisters, I would give my life to cause the rain to come, or to help you in your trouble."

"She talks, humph! Actions are what we want; talk, talk, does not help distress."

"Tell me, then, what shall I do?"

They all laughed scornfully, saying, "If we knew, we could do it ourselves."

But the poor little old maid saw away off in the east a speck of a cloud.

"Oh, if I could only loosen myself from the tree I would try and reach the cloud, and I would beg it so pitifully to come and save you all." She struggled and twisted in vain. It grew hotter and hotter, and the leaves curled and cracked and moaned. But a little breeze at last sprung up, and with one great effort she flew away, borne along on its friendly bosom.

"Oh! dear cloud," she cried, "will you not come to the thirsty little leaves, who are fading and dying for lack of a few of your kindly tears?"

"I would willingly, if a breeze would only take me that way."

She looked appealingly at the breeze.

"I will take you a little higher in the air, and there you will find one of my brothers going west with all speed; he will take you willingly." And in a moment more the cloud and the leaf were flying along toward the moaning tree and the poor parched earth.

She was so eager to tell her sisters the good news that she went on the very edge of the breeze, and came with such force that instead of alighting at her place, on top of the tree, she was carried to the lowest branch and thrown into a deep knot-hole, without a sister near to hear or help her.

“Oh, dear! oh, dear!” she cried, “must I be separated forever from my companions, and be shut up in this little ugly hole, and not even see the good my errand accomplishes!”

“Do not murmur,” said a soft voice beneath her; “did you not say that you would willingly give your life to save the others?”

“Yes; but this is such an ignoble way.”

“O ho; then you did the good act for praise, and not for goodness sake?” But before she could reply the rain came down in torrents, and she spluttered and gasped as the water filled her little house; but she soon arose to the top, and then fell to the earth with the overflowing water. She thought of her whole life, during the short moment of her fall, and that in a moment more she would be torn to pieces by the ugly old thorn-bush just beneath; but the wind took her a little to the side, and she was carried by the water into the brook. As she rushed along she met hideous great monsters, who dived their big flat beaks at her, and flapped their enormous wings, and made such a terrible noise with their “quack, quack,” that she thought they were wild. So they were, the poor ducks, with joy. Then the rain came slower, and the village boys and girls ran out, and with their bare fat legs splashed and danced in the running water. The rain seemed to have brought life and joy; the whole village was astir.

Soon our two-winged messenger was caught by a chubby brown hand, and the owner cried, “See! see! my pretty boat!” and tying a string around the delicate wings, pulled her violently against the stream; this treatment and the wild shouts of merriment frightened her nearly to death.

“Oh! here’s a prettier one!” cried the child; “see, this old

thing is all broken," and he cast it contemptuously back into the water. How ashamed she felt, thus torn and despised; but the rain had ceased, and the water began to recede, so she was carried back to her tree and thrown into a hole at the foot of the ugly thorn-bush. Hearing her moan and cry, the old thorn-bush looked at her pityingly and said:

"Don't weep, and think how ill your goodness has been rewarded; we often feel so in this world, but there is a future even for you. Let me cover your poor shivering body with a little of this kind earth; you will not regret it."

But she sobbed so that she could not reply; then, as the wind stirred him, he scratched the earth with his thorns, and covered her from the scornful glances and the painful pity of the now bright leaves.

"Oh! it is so dark and cold here," she murmured all night long, and the bush tried to comfort her; but the same moan came from the earth for many days, still the bush would say:

"Have patience, little one; your reward will soon come."

One morning, when the sun was shining brightly, the voice came up:

"It is warmer now, and I feel no pain." The old bush was glad.

Another day she said, "I feel so strangely, and can almost see the light!" And the next morning when the old bush awoke, two tiny green leaves had shot up from the earth, and then he greeted her, "See now how pretty you are; you will become a beautiful tree, and birds will sing among your leaves, and under your branches lovers will sigh." And she looked, and was so happy. "Oh, thank you, kind bush; and you are not so ugly as you used to be."

The old bush smiled, and the young tree grew. Soon she

attracted the attention of her sisters. "Oh! what a beautiful creature!" they cried. "Mamma, shall we ever be like her?" But the old tree shook her head. Then envy filled their breasts, and they mocked and taunted the whole day long. But the young tree grew so straight and tall and slender, that she heeded them not. When the rain came and beat down the poor bush, for he was old and brittle, she said to him :

" My kind friend, throw your arms around my strong body, and I will protect you from the wind and rain."

But the bush said sadly: "Ah, little one, my ugly thorns would tear your pretty skin, and stop your beautiful growth. I have but a little while to live; it matters not."

But when some boys passed by, and kicked and broke his branches, and trampled on his thorns—the thorns that had been so kind to her—again she said:

" Oh! lean on me. My heart aches to see you suffer so."

" Not yet; not yet," it replied, faintly.

" Still the young tree grew. One day a horse came trampling by, and crushed the poor bush clear down to the earth.

" Oh! now let me help you," cried the tree, and bent down her beautiful arms to raise him; but she had grown so high that the bush was far beneath her, and she could not even touch his poor, crushed branches.

" Too late! too late!" he murmured, and he spoke no more.

So when the Autumn came, she covered him with red and golden glory, and showered his grave with dewy tears, and often murmured, as the wind swept through her leaves:

" Dear friend! dear friend!"

## THE BOY WHO HAD HIS WISHES GRANTED.



NCE upon a time there lived a little boy named Frankie. He was a nice little boy, and when he was in an obliging temper would bring the coal, gather chips, or help wash the dishes; and when he wasn't in an obliging temper, he wasn't quite such a nice little boy. One day his mother said:

"Frankie, I want you to wash the dishes this morning, and I'll wipe them."

"I don't want to do it to-day."

"Oh, come, be a good boy and help mamma."

"I tell you I don't want to; I wasn't born to work."

"No? You'll find you'll have to do so in this world; so say no more, but begin the dishes." She poured the water on them just hot enough to wash them clean, without burning his hands.

"Umph!" and he slapped his fingers into the water, splashing his mother's face, and wetting his shirt. "I wish the water was so hot I couldn't wash them at all."

How quickly he jerked his hands out of the dish-pan, and set up a shriek like a wild Comanche Indian.

"Oh! oh! oh! Look! Fire! fire! fire!" and he held up his hands, fairly dancing with pain. There were ten little red balls of misery. His mother quickly did them up in bags of flour, he screaming "fire! fire!" all the time, in such a ter-

ribly loud voice that soon all the fire bells in the city were ringing furiously, and the engines came running up the street, and hearing the terrible cries, didn't wait to see the smoke, but turned the water on, and drenched poor Frankie to the skin, and in a moment more would have flooded the house, but his mother rushed to the door, and waving her arms wildly, shouted for them to stop, as it was only her little boy who had burnt his fingers.\*

The gallant b'hoys—it was before they used steamers—didn't know whether to laugh or be angry, but soon concluded it was rather funny than otherwise, so went back laughing and shouting for the boy with the burnt fingers.

It was weeks before Frankie's hands got well, and he accepted the indulgence of lying in bed long, long after breakfast, with a great deal of lazy pleasure.

When he was quite well, his mother thought it was time to break up this indolent habit, so after coaxing him for some time, one morning she spoke quite sharply, and said he must get up, or have no breakfast.,

“Bring it up here, can't you? it isn't much trouble.”

“No; come down or go without.”

“You won't let me do the least thing. Oh, dear, I wish I couldn't get up.”

“Very well; come down when you are tired of being a slug-a-bed;” and his mother left the room, shutting the door. How quiet the house was all morning; no Frankie came down or called “mamma.” At last she was frightened, thinking he was ill, or worse, so she hurried up stairs and rushed into the room.

\* This reminds me that in Natchez, a few years ago, the fire-bells rang, and the engines came out, or were about to, to put out the Aurora Borealis! I was as bad, for I thought it was our house on fire.

"Oh, I can't get up, and I've tried ever so hard," he whined.  
"What is the matter with me?"

She took him by the hand to help him up, but he rolled on to his side, and when she took his other hand, he rolled back again; but she could not raise him up. She called the gardener, and they both pulled, but in vain; then she fetched a couple of neighbors, with the same result; then one more dropped in and took his head, while the rest took his arms and legs, and they pulled till he screamed with the pain.

"Go away, oh, go away! You're pulling me to pieces! I don't want to ever see your faces any more. You're worse than wild Injuns, so you are!" Then he hid his face in the bed-clothes, and held his legs and arms tight to his body, and so staid till they left him, wondering at his miraculous strength and advising his mother to send him to Barnum.

His mother did not know what to do, but thought, as boys were very fond of eating, to let him go hungry till he came for his meals would be the easiest way to get him up. But, as the day passed and he did not make his appearance, his mother went for the doctor, thinking he really must be ill. He was a good-natured man, with a pleasant smile. He didn't wear spectacles and look learned, and so frighten the little fellows, but spoke kindly and felt his pulse, looked at his tongue and sounded his chest.

"I don't see anything the matter with him, madam!"

"But he can't get up, he tells me, although he tries to ever so much."

"Ah! anything the matter with his legs?" and the doctor felt his legs, arms and spine, but shook his head; and beckoning his mother out of the room, he said:

"Nothing ails the boy but laziness; so don't go near him or

give him anything to eat till he gets up, drapes himself and comes down stairs. Good day, madam!"

So she took his advice, and did not go near him for two days, thinking how stubborn he was, and wondering where he could get it from; it must be from his father, as she certainly was the most easily persuaded creature in the world! At the end of the second day, he hallooed to her so lustily that she heard him through closed doors and all.

"Oh! I'm just starving! How can you be so cruel?"

"Then why don't you get up?"

"I can't, I tell you!" So again she left the room; but in an hour or two his cries again reached her. So the doctor was brought the second time. He was inclined to be a little provoked at first, but when she told him he had not got up, or eaten anything for over two days, he looked serious, gave him some bitter medicine, and ordered him to be fed on gruel. The first mouthful disgusted Frankie, and he spit it out, saying:

"Ugh! the nasty stuff;" but finding he could get nothing else, he eagerly ate a bowlful. His mother felt so sorry for him that she bought him a beautiful picture-book, and a balloon, and a box of toys, and, when the doctor would let her, she gave him a little jam, and other delicacies; but with all this, Frankie got very thin. One day when he was alone, and so tired of books, toys, and balloon, he said:

"Oh, dear! I am so tired of lying in bed. I wish I could get up."

And as he spoke he made another effort, and was on the floor before you could say "Jack Robinson." How surprised his mother was! She kissed him, and made such a fuss over him, that he felt quite proud and important. He wandered

around the house, and everything seemed new to him. At last he came to the looking-glass, and, looking in, he said:

“ Well, I am a little thin; I must have been very sick. If mamma gives me so many toys and nice things to eat because I look this bad, wouldn’t she give me lots if I was worse ? ”

Turning from the glass, he said:

“ I wish I was just as thin as a skeleton ! ”

Then he went to his mother to ask her for some cake. As soon as she saw him she uttered a shriek and ran out of the house.

“ Why, what’s the matter with mamma ? ” he said, following after her; but the people rushed away at his approach, screaming and crying, and white with terror.

“ Are they crazy, ” he said, half vexed and half angry, “ to make such a fuss because a fellow’s a little thin ? ” but when they cried “ Ghost ! ghost ! ” he too began to feel a little queer, and to look around; but seeing nothing, he soon went home, for it was no fun to be on the street with no one to play with. After a little his mother returned.

“ Oh, my poor boy ! my poor boy ! what has happened to you ? ”

“ Why, nothing ; I’m beginning to feel ever so good ! ”

“ Oh, dear ! oh, poor thing ! ” was all she could say.

“ Then, what is the matter ? ” he asked, going to the looking-glass again; but as soon as he caught sight of his face, he gave a yell and a jump, and turned a back somersault, and so continued turning till his feet struck the wall, and left him standing on his head in the corner ! His mother put him to bed, and then commenced the gruel and medicine again, and in a week, what a tired, miserable boy, was Frankie ! So one day he stole out of the house, determined he’d stay in bed no

longer; but when people again fled from him, he felt as if he had been drawn through a knot-hole.

“Oh! dear! I wish I was so fat that it would burst the clothes off my back!”

Bang! bang! bang! Was it a miniature Fourth of July? One button struck his nose, another nearly knocked a tooth out, and he was about calling for the police, thinking some boys were firing stones at him, when the cold air penetrating to his skin, showed him what was the matter. Oh! horror! His clothes were falling in pieces from his body, and had he not grasped the fragments around him, and rushed home, he would have been a male Godiva, without the horse.

His mother was standing at her door, and as he tried to rush past her, she caught him by the arm.

“You shameless, ragged boy! what do you want in my house?”

“Don’t you know me, mamma?”

She knew the voice, but was so amazed that she could hardly speak. “You’ve, you’ve been eating something, and are all swelled up. Oh! dear! go to bed till I alter your clothes to fit you.”

As soon as he had his new clothes made, all the neighbors came to see him, and brought him all sorts of presents, and advised his mother to rent him to a circus. The idea pleased Frankie very much, for what boy ever lived who did not wish at some time of his life to become a clown or rider in a circus. After his mother had been bored with twenty different propositions daily for a week, and Frankie had begged as often, she consented to his going for a short time, at twenty dollars a week, part in advance; this she put in the bank, and gave him the book, telling him it was the beginning of his fortune. He





went away with the man in the fine new suit, trimmed with gold lace, feeling very proud and happy.

For a few days he enjoyed sitting on a platform and listening to the comments of the people; besides they gave him many little things that pleased him vastly, but he soon tired of not being allowed to play in the dirt, and whoop and hallo, like he did in his own yard. So he hoped for a few days more, then he said to himself, he wished he wasn't so fat, then the circus wouldn't want him at all. A few minutes afterward the proprietor came along, and seeing no crowd around him, looked up, and seeing only an ordinary boy in his place, and dressed like his fat curiosity, he ordered him out of the tent, and said he'd have him arrested if he came there dressed up to deceive people; then he went to hunt up his fat boy. But poor Frankie didn't know what to do. After walking awhile, he found he was in the town where he lived—they traveled at night, so he did not know it before. How joyfully he inquired his way home, and rushed into his mother's arms!

"Ah! my dear boy, have they starved you, the cruel wretches; but I like you this way best, for now you look like my little Frankie again."

They lived very happy for a week or two, when he said to his mother:

"I think it would be ever so nice, if one could have all their wishes granted."

"I don't think so, my little boy, for one might wish for many foolish things, that they would be very sorry for afterward."

"I don't believe I ever should! Just think—we wouldn't need railroads, ships, nor even balloons. Then we could see if there was a man in the moon; and if the stars would burn our fingers, if we touched them."

“Yes, that would be all very nice, but did you never hear little fellows, and big ones too, wish the ‘dickens’ had it, the ‘it’ perhaps being mother’s best bureau, against which a little fellow had bumped his head, or a shirt lacking a button? then, too, I have heard some people wickedly wish they were dead, because they had the toothache, or had lost a little money.”

“You wouldn’t catch me wishing I was dead, when kites and marbles are so cheap. Oh! mamma, just look out of the window at those pretty little girls; ain’t they dressed nice; look at their pretty shoes”—then he looked at his own, which were rather coarse and large—“and their hats, and what little waists; I wish I was a girl!” What made him suddenly feel so uncomfortable? He could scarcely breathe, and he didn’t think now the girls were pretty at all! Then his feet ached, and he couldn’t keep his hat on the top of his head! He walked away from the window, saying: “What airs those girls do put on!” But before he reached the door he tripped, and nearly knocked his nose; the heels of his boots were so miserably high; something, too, impeded his walking; he looked to see what was the matter with his coat—and oh! horror!—beheld a fashionable “pull-back” and a trailing skirt, and little tight shoes, and a contemptible little hat that would insist on remaining on the back of his head, or neck—nothing could exceed his amazement and disgust!

His mother, looking up from her book, noticed the change for the first time, and thought some young lady had come to visit her, and said:

“How do you do, dear? How prettily you are dressed.” “Mamma!” he screamed, indignantly; but he did not know his own voice—it was now an angry female shriek; “mamma, don’t you know me; I’m no girl; oh, dear, I know what it is;

Giant Strongbody or some old witch has been granting all my foolish wishes; I wish they would"—he stopped in terror—"I was going to wish they wouldn't, without wishing to be a boy again." So he wished himself back into a boy, as soon as possible, for fear the giants or witches would change their minds.

"What a lucky escape I've had; why, that was worse than being fat, or a skeleton. Suppose I had remained a girl, I might have had to marry red-headed Bill Jones, that I hate so. Mamma, can you breathe with your dress so tight? and how do you sit down when it is tied back so? I don't wish any more of my wishes granted. Why, I couldn't have voted when I was grown, nor play billiards, or casino in the groceries, like other men, or be president, or march in a torch-light procession, or have any fun. I pity girls, I do; what do they want to live for? they can't do nothing; they can't even be soldiers and fight the Injuns—they can only stay at home and sweep and wash dishes!" but here he faltered a little, knowing that the latter was sometimes his occupation, "they can't even drive street-cars—what are they good for?"

"Your mother was one, Frankie," she said, softly and seriously.

"Oh, mamma! were you? but you can do everything!" and he threw himself into her arms; "and you know everything, and you are the dearest, sweetest person in the world, better than any man that ever lived!" and he buried his face in her bosom, and she told him about some of the great and good women that had lived in this world, of their patient suffering, of their heroism, of their genius, and taught him to respect the name of woman as something almost sacred, and he said:

"Indeed, indeed, I always shall, because my darling, dear mamma is one!"

## THE LITTLE HORSE-DOCTOR AND HIS SHOW.



ALL boys are not cruel, though many like to hurt and tease animals for the pleasure of seeing them suffer; but our John was not of that number. His mother was a poor, hard-working woman, and his father was dead, yet for all that she wished him to have a good education, and never let him be absent a day from school.

In his heart he felt how good she was to him, and he did all in his power to show her he appreciated it. He helped her all he could in the early morning, then after school he did little odd jobs, and all the money he made he gave her to help in housekeeping.

They lived on the outskirts of the village, near a large common, across which the village began again. Here were old carts, that their owners could not make up their minds to cut up and burn, left to moulder away and drop to pieces in the wind and rain; heaps of rubbish, old shoes, tins and broken crockery. Here, too, occasionally, an old horse that had outlived his usefulness, and accordingly his master's affections, was turned out to die; there were two or three trees here, and a little grass, so he could die gradually, thus easing his owner's mind from any idea of cruelty. This was a place of great interest for John; he would go there to philosophize, and many a poor lame dog he had been kind to would welcome his approach with a gladsome wagging of the tail.

One evening after school, as he was crossing this common, to cut some wood for one of his customers, as he called those who paid him for little jobs, he noticed a poor, sick looking, lame, gray horse, walking with great difficulty, and nibbling the scanty tufts of grass; he went to him, and speaking gently, patted his back and rubbed his nose; then he examined his mouth, and, being a little bit of an expert, found that he was not such a very old horse after all; then he looked at his leg; it was very sore. He wondered why he was so miserably thin, and whether he was put out there to die. Then with another pat and another kind word, he cried out:

“Cheer up, old fellow! I’ll see what I can do for you!” and went to his wood-cutting. All the while his thoughts were occupied by the gray horse, and he wondered how a man could be cruel to his beasts that had been a pleasure to him, and perhaps had earned a greater part of his living.

“Please, Mrs. Jones, can you tell me to whom that poor gray horse out here on the common belongs?” he at last asked the woman for whom he was working.

“Weel, lad, I dinna ken he belongs to ony one now. Auld Mike, around the corner, used to own him, but he’s mickle use to ony one now, so I s’pose he’s out to die.” When he had finished his job, he went to Mike’s, and asked him about the horse.

“The baste is sick and lazy, and I can’t afford to kape a hospital; he’ll never get well, so he can die there.”

“Will you give him to me, please, Mr. Mike?”

“Ho! ha! ha! and are ye so rich that ye can afford to kape useless animals to feed? But take him for all I care.” So John wrote on a scrap of paper:

“I give the sick gray horse—what’s his name, Mr. Mike?”

“Whitey.”

“Whitey, to John Silvertree. Will you please put your name to this, so that no one can say I took him without your leave.” Mike laughed and said:

“Well, ye’re a downright business one—there—” and he scrawled his name with much ado and few of Hogarth’s lines of beauty.

“Thank you, Mr. Mike,” said John, and slowly led his horse to his back gate; then he suddenly thought what would his mother say? His hesitation was but short, for he knew what a kind heart she had, and he smiled a little vainly, as he thought how everything he did was right in her eyes; so he opened the gate and led the horse in.

“Why, John, lad, what in the world have you got there?” asked his mother who was in the yard hanging up some clothes. Then he told her all about the horse, and how it belonged to him now.

“But, lad, how are you going to feed and shelter the poor sick beast?”

“Well, mother, if you’ll let him share your wood-shed to-night, to-morrow I’ll try and fix a place for him. I believe I can cure him with care and enough to eat; then he’ll be worth considerable.”

“Well, well, lad, do as you please; it’ll surely be all right.” So John piled the coal and wood on one side; but he could only make room for poor “Whitey’s” head and shoulders.

“Ah, poor beast; you’ll have to lay on the ground to-night; but I expect that’s nothing new to you. Mother, what shall I give him to eat?”

“Ah, you ought to have thought of that before you took such a present. I’ve got a little flour, but horses won’t eat

that, or bread and meat; yes, I've some cornmeal; how will that do?"

"I should think that would be just the thing for a sick horse." So he put some in a bucket and wet it with a little water, then placed it before old "Whitey;" how he picked up his ears and kept his nose in the bucket, showing it was a rare treat to him. John and his mother both stood watchful and admiring.

"Poor fellow; I guess you've been half starved; no wonder you didn't get well; mother, you didn't think I'd ever own a horse, did you?" But she smiled in such a peculiar way that it was like an audible reply.

"Oh, you think he isn't much of a horse to own, any way; just wait awhile, mother, and I'll show you a different animal." Then he went to a neighbor's and swept his stable, for a couple of armfuls of hay and straw, and binding his leg tightly in his mother's home-made liniment, after he had washed it thoroughly, he made him as comfortable as he could, with the straw for a bed and the hay convenient to eat, and a piece of old blanket for a covering; then left him for the night and went to his supper, which his mother had kept waiting for him for over an hour. After that, he helped her wash the dishes; then they both sat down by the friendly light of a little shaded lamp, he to study and say an occasional word to his mother, and she to sew, after talking to him, for he said he didn't mind, he could study all the same, and it was a relief to the good woman to have an intelligent young ear into which to pour her trials and hopes; so the evening passed.

Next morning John got up bright and early. Old "Whitey" was much better, and greeted him with a friendly neigh. After rebandaging his leg, he rubbed him down with an old

shoe-brush; then, giving him some more cornmeal, he went to school. It was with the greatest difficulty he could keep his mind on his books; finally, at recess, he said to himself: "I must think this out, and have done with it." So he rested his head on his hands, and with his elbows on his desk he tried to solve the problem of how to get a supply of merchandise without the necessary cash; steal it he wouldn't; go in debt he couldn't; yet "Whitey" must be fed and sheltered.

"What's the matter, John; got the headache?" asked one of the kindest boys in school.

"No, but I'm thinking." Then he told him all about the trouble he was in, and the boy, after thinking a moment, exclaimed:

"If you don't want to be too grand, and old material will do, I can tell you something to help you. Up our way they are pulling down an old house. Perhaps, if you'd help them after school, they would give you enough stuff to build a stable for your Bucephalus."

"Thank you, Will, that'll just do, and I think I can manage it; but you won't call the poor, sick beast 'Bucephalus,' when you see him."

"I'll come and help you, John, if you show me how to do those sums I missed last week."

So it was all arranged, and after school the two boys went to the man in charge of the pulling down of the old house, and John told him what he wanted, and that he would help so many hours for enough old lumber and nails to build a shed just large enough to shelter the poor horse. The man was a good-hearted fellow, and readily consented. So John and Will worked vigorously for a couple of hours, and then, with their arms full of old boards, they hurried along the streets to

John's back-gate. Old "Whitey" was walking about the yard, but the moment John appeared, he pricked up his ears and gave such a neigh that both boys burst out laughing.

"He knows you already, John. I shouldn't wonder but that you'll make something of him," said Will. Then, taking off their coats, both the boys went to work. The days were long, so they still had several hours before dark; and just as the moon arose they had finished quite a good little shed.

"Well, I'm glad that's done; I shall sleep more comfortable to-night. Won't you come in, Will, and take a cup of tea with us? Mother has been waiting ever so long, but she saw how anxious I was to finish it, and she did not bother me."

"No, I must go home, for my folks will be getting frightened, for I never stay away so long without their knowing it; but I sent a little fellow to tell them, so it will be all right, if he did not forget. Good-by; you can show me the sums to-morrow."

How proudly John put old "Whitey" in the shed, which he dignified by the name of "stable." There was a rack for the hay, and a box for the food; but John had nothing for him to-night but a few potatoes and a handful of hay.

"Never mind, old fellow, that's a little better than you've been used to lately; but to-morrow I'll try and lay in a supply. You don't mind having no door, do you? that's healthy; and I don't think anybody will want to steal you yet. Good-night."

With several weeks of care, John succeeded in curing old "Whitey's" leg; but the time it took, and the work he had to do to get his food, seriously interfered with his earning the little money he used to; but his mother seemed to be almost

as much interested as he was, and, between the two, the horse became so tame and gentle that they taught him all manner of little tricks.

When John saw the horse was likely to be valuable, he got his little deed of gift legally attested, and then let the horse follow him to school; but he taught him to return home the minute the bell sounded, which he did in a very lively trot. When it was time for the school to be let out, his mother would open the gate, and "Whitey" was off like an arrow. The horse was now the wonder and envy of all the boys. Those that had made the most fun, calling John the horse-doctor, were now most loud in his praise.

Mike one day asked him what had become of the old horse. John was near his gate; so he opened it and whistled, and "Whitey" came bounding out, showing every sign of joy.

"Shure, that's not him!"

"Well, it is, Mr. Mike."

"Ye don't tell me! And was I fool enough to give ye him for nothing? But did I give him to kape?"

"Well, here's the paper, and I've got it legally attested. Let me show you the tricks he can do." Then he went through quite a performance of shaking his foot, nodding his head, and laying down and getting up, finishing with a clumsy kind of dancing step. By this time, a crowd of boys had collected, and how they applauded and shouted, and would scarcely let him put his horse back in the stable. Old Mike went away growling at his ill-luck, vowing he'd shoot the next horse before he'd give it away for another man to make his fortune off him. But it had proved anything but a fortune as yet to poor John, who now wore patches on his knees and elbows, and a very rusty hat.

One day, as he was on the Common with his horse, watching him eat the grass—he never let him go anywhere alone now, for fear he would be stolen—he heard a regular hubbub, and a lot of boys came rushing after a poor dog, with a tin-pan tied to his tail. As quick as thought, John placed himself in front of him, and, as he turned aside, he put his foot on the long string that dangled behind him, then holding him by the neck, so that he could not bite, he released the obnoxious appendage from his tail.

“There, boys, that’ll do; you had your fun. You’ve seen the dog as frightened as you could get him; now let him go home.”

“Is it any of your business, John Horse-Doctor?” spoke up one of the worst boys in the crowd.

“My business or not, I’m going to protect that dog. I’ve said nothing impolite to any of you. James White, I want you to see fair play.”

“All right,” and he came from the rank of dog-hunters and stood alone.

“Oh! you think you’re so smart because you cured an old horse, don’t you, now? Phew! look at the patches on his breeches.”

“Is it a fight you want, Dick Brown?”

“Ah! ah!” the boys began shouting.

“James White, you see that the boys let us two fight it out.”

“All right, go ahead; fair play, boys.”

But Dick Brown was a coward, and turning away, said: “I ain’t going to fight about an old dog.”

He was bigger than John; so the boys all laughed, and one, about John’s size, jumped from the crowd and aimed a lively blow at John’s nose, but he caught it on his arm, and,

with a quick movement, gave him in return a flat-handed slap on the face with such force that it knocked him five or six feet, till he staggered back against the other boys. This caused another laugh, and the crowd broke up; and some of them asked John to make his horse perform like he did for old Mike; and John, who thought it was best to accomplish things by good nature, showed off "Whitey" to the best advantage, first having quieted the dog and got him to lay down by his side.

When he went home, he had another follower, and as the poor dog sneaked in after him, his mother said:

"Oh! John, John! the sick and the lame will be eating us up. Why weren't ye rich, poor lad?"

"Mother, we need a watch-dog now, and I rescued the poor brute from the thoughtless boys; let's keep him a day or two, anyhow; he can eat old scraps; it's very different from a horse." So that was settled, and the dog shared the stable with "Whitey," and they soon became firm friends. Now whether dog language and horse language are similar, or whether each animal is learned in a variety of tongues, certain it is that "Whitey" had told "Webster"—this was the name John had given the dog on account of his large head—all his history, and how he could best please their kind master. So the second morning when John came to the stable, there stood "Webster" on his hind legs, begging as prettily as any mendicant's dog; how he laughed; "Oh, I shall have quite a menagerie soon." So he taught him other tricks, and his clothes got rustier. But wherever he went the horse and dog followed him, and his appearance was always the signal for:

"Here comes the little horse-doctor," and a rush to see him, or rather them.

One Saturday he went into the woods to learn to ride "Whitey," whom he now called "Bucephalus," because the boys all begged him to do so, without a saddle, for he did not know when he could afford to buy such a piece of extravagance, when he heard a peculiar noise, and "Webster" rushed to an old stump, and began growling. John slid from "Bucephalus'" back, and examining the stump, discovered a wounded squirrel entangled in some thorns and vines; so he released him, and tied him up in his handkerchief, and after riding around a little they all went home. In a few days the squirrel was well and getting quite tame, and John thought: "Now something must be done; my family is so large, and my clothes won't hold together much longer, and they require food and attention, and I get time to earn so little—then mother has to work so much harder; but never a reproach falls from her lips. What can I do? Not turn my poor pets into the streets, for they wouldn't go; not sell them, for that would almost kill me." But Will, coming in, they consulted together, and seeing things were at a crisis, he advised John to give an exhibition every Saturday to the boys, and charge them a couple of cents each "for the horse."

"You know, it is the boys, bothering you so to let them see all the tricks, that prevents you earning more money; now, if they want to see so bad, let them pay at least a little to help feed the horse. I'll tend door for nothing, and you run in right now and ask your mother, and I'll stay an hour and help you fix up." So John put the case to his mother in the best possible light, and soon came out with her consent. So the boys cleaned the yard and stable—for the next day was Saturday—constructed a couple of rude benches, and wrote out a little notice and put it on the gate. Will promised to lend him a

square of carpet, and a red calico curtain to cover the entrance to the stable; and there the preparations ended.

John could hardly sleep, and was up long before the sun, currying "Bucephalus"—some one had given him an old comb for services rendered—brushing the dog and petting the squirrel. He fed them with the best he had, dividing his breakfast with "Webster," who, having such an immense brain, of course needed plenty of food. At last he heard the boys beginning to come to the gate and read the notice, for Will had told as many as he could, and they all determined they would be there, for most of them liked John now, and were glad of an opportunity to help him, and at the same time please themselves. Only a few envious, "ugly" boys held out.

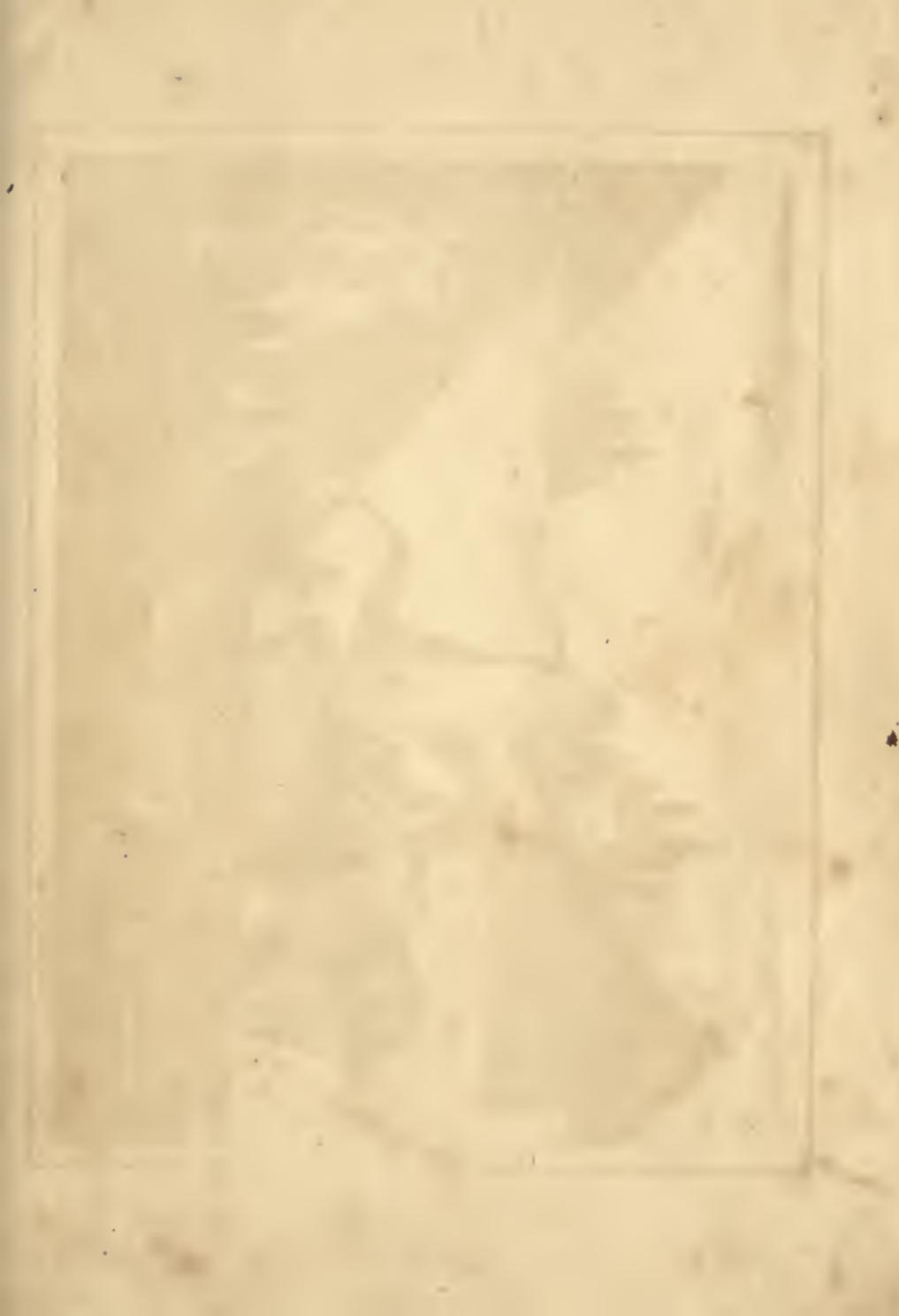
Some boy read in a loud voice:

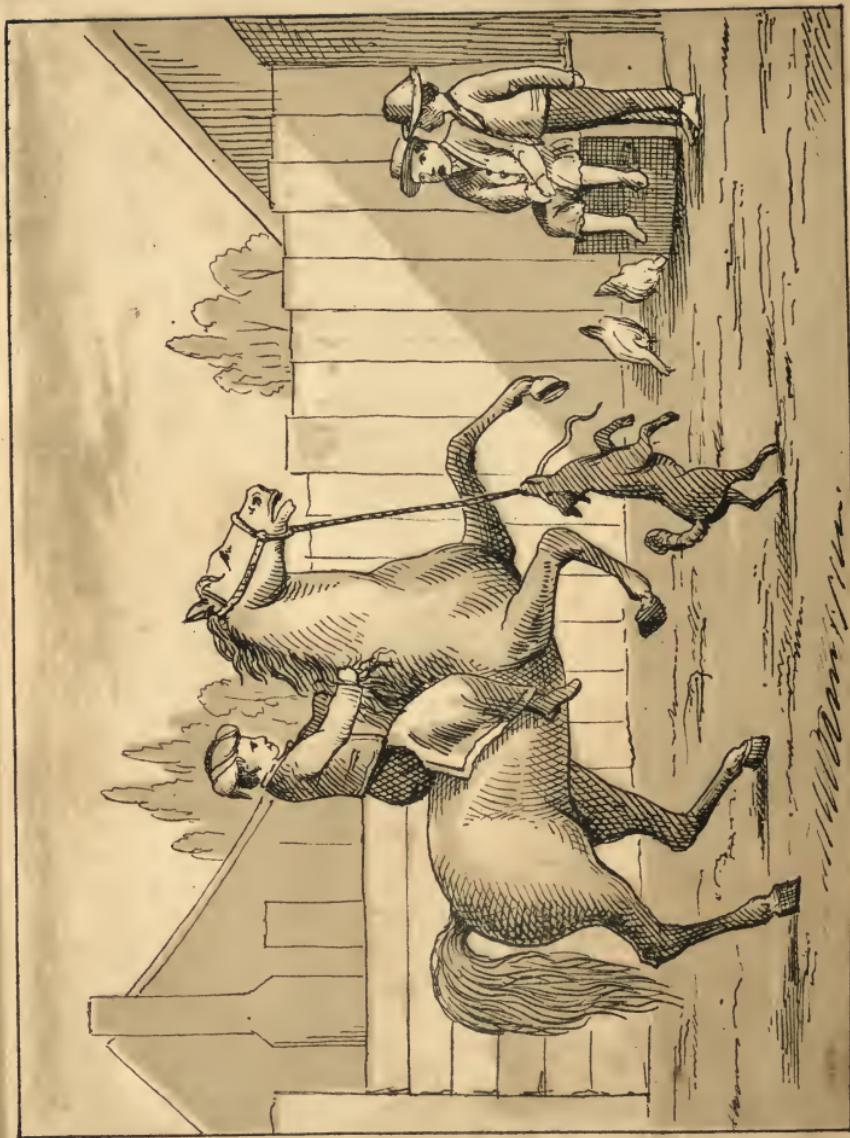
"NOTICE!—Exhibition at 8 a. m., of the trained horse 'Bucephalus,' the dog 'Webster,' and the squirrel 'Le Petite.' Admission, 2 cents—for the horse."

Will came through the front way and told him they had better begin, as they would have to give several exhibitions to accommodate all the boys who were coming. So John hung the red curtain and placed the square of carpet in the middle of the yard, in front of the benches, then retired into the stable. Will was to ring a bell when there were enough boys in, and John was to make a grand entrance.

Soon the boys began to knock on the gate, and, after a civil delay, not to be too eager, you know, Will opened it.

"Now, boys, in order, pay as you enter. There's not seats for many; but some of you can stand if you like." Over twenty boys crowded into the little yard, when Will shut the gate, posting a notice that the next exhibition would be in an hour; then he rang the bell.





The curtains parted, and John appeared with a shawl wrapped around him to hide his patches, and a scarf, twisted into a turban, on his head. He held "Bucephalus," who appeared to paw the ground with fiery impatience. The boys gave them a hearty reception, and the blood mounted to John's forehead, he felt so ashamed to be showing off for money; but he had made up his mind he must go through with it, for the benefit of his poor animals, and he did so.

He ordered "Bucephalus" to lay down on the carpet, then he threw himself down, with his head on the horse and one of the animal's legs across his chest. This was "The Dying Turk." Then he snapped his fingers and the horse stood upon his feet, and at another snap "Webster" rushed from the stable, seized the reins, and, as John threw himself across the horse's back, with his eyes closed, the dog led him slowly around the yard. This was "The Faithful Friends." At a snap of the fingers they stood still, John sat up and held the horse's mane, while he stood on his hind feet, raising the dog in the air, who still held the reins. This was called "The Fiery Steed," and was loudly applauded.

After several other tricks, equally good, especially the last one, where the squirrel was placed on the horse's head, and "Webster" holding the reins, standing on his hind legs, they all had a lively dance to the music of a mouth-organ, played by John.

He gave three more exhibitions that day, and the boys of the village were wild with excitement. Will congratulated him on his success, and handed him over three dollars as the receipts.

"Oh! thank you, Will; you're a real good boy. Won't you have some of the money? I'm sure you've earned it."

"Indeed, I won't. Put by some toward a suit of clothes; and take the rest, and I'll go with you to lay in a supply of food for your animals."

John forgot his aching bones and the weary feeling of exhaustion, produced by the excitement, in the great joy of being able to give poor "Whitey," as he still called him in his tender moments, a bountiful feed of oats and corn, and a nice straw-bed to lie upon. "That's just what you shall do, John," said his mother, who had been much interested all day in the way things went. So she claimed a dollar to put by for the clothes—"for you need them, bad, John"—and told him to spend the rest on the animals.

It was decided that he should give a short exhibition every morning, at half price, till Friday; then they would prepare for Saturday, when he would show all new tricks. This was Will's idea, so that John could get the new suit on Saturday night, and be able to go to church on Sunday.

Ten to twenty boys came every morning, and Saturday he had to give exhibitions till the sun went down, the crowd was so great, even men coming and enjoying themselves as much as the boys. Well, he got the new clothes, and laid in another stock of food for the animals.

"The next money you shall have, mother, to buy a new Sunday dress. Oh! I shall soon be able to help you, now."

One afternoon—it was vacation now—he had all his family in the woods, exercising, when he heard a low growl. What could it be? "Webster" rushed about frantically, snuffing here and there, and appeared perfectly wild. John examined the bushes and stumps cautiously, at last coming to a close thicket. He heard the low growl, or rather moan, again. It was some animal in pain; so he pressed through the thicket

till he came to the creature—whatever it was—lying crouched up in a dark mass. Good gracious! it was a bear. Whether bears were inhabitants of those woods, or whether it was lost from a circus, John could not tell. He drove the dog back, and watched the bear for some little time, speaking kindly. Seeing that he did not attempt to move, he concluded that one of his legs was broken. Taking a piece of bread out of his pocket, he offered it to the bear, who must have been very weak and hungry, for he ate it from his hand, and did not attempt any violence. Gradually John examined his legs, and found, sure enough, one was broken; so, dipping his hand-kerchief in a spring, he bound it up while he was eating, and then thought if he could only get him home, he would try to cure and tame him, if he was not tame already. He found he was quite a young bear, and so thin that he could lift him in his arms. So he tied him on the horse's back—he always carried string in his pocket—and the strange cavalcade came back to the village. Before night the whole place knew that John Silvertree had captured a live bear!

It was not many weeks before the bear was cured, and being instructed, perhaps, by the secret councils of "Bucephalus," he willingly learned various little tricks.

And now John thought of enlarging the field of his operations; in fact, to build a stable and show combined. He had saved enough money by this time to buy good, new lumber and hire a carpenter for a few days. He helped, under his instruction, and soon quite a nice little building arose, perforated on three sides with innumerable round holes, like a man-of-war. He had put a notice on the gate that there would be no show till Saturday, so all the boys were on the tip-toe of expectation. And what a show he gave them; he had studied a lot of

pictures from books, and these he imitated as near as practicable, getting a lot of branches of trees and moss from the woods, and covering boxes and lumber with slate-colored muslin to imitate rocks, bright calicoes for drapery and curtains, gay trappings for the horse, bear and dog; then he had a little green curtain drawn before the holes, which he managed easily with a couple of draw-strings; when all was ready and he was dressed—he changed for each picture—he rang a bell and drew the curtain aside; for a moment the boys were hushed with amazement, then they burst out in such a shout that it would have done an old showman's heart good. Well, this was a greater success than the other, and before many days he found himself paying taxes as a licensed showman.

John was determined now his mother should not work so hard.

"Work for yourself and me, mother, but no more washing and scrubbing for other people." So he gave her plenty of money to keep house, paid the rent regularly, and bought her plenty of good, comfortable clothes.

John's show became a permanent institution, and as the village was enlarging rapidly, some gentleman suggested to him the idea of building a small theater, and give such instructive exhibitions that it should be a benefit to the place. He caught at the idea with great enthusiasm.

Several offered to go in partnership with him in the enterprise, but John said no, he would wait till he had saved the money. In the meantime he saw no animal in distress that he did not relieve, and if he was good for his business, he trained and made use of him. While he was saving to build the theater, he also had another scheme in his head; that was, to found a hospital for sick, ownerless animals.

Some of the worldly-wise said he had a long head on him; he made his benevolence pay. But those that knew him remembered how he went rusty and patched, in order to feed and care for the poor animals, who then gave no indication of ever being able to work and pay back ever so little.

In course of time the money was saved, and the theater built and paid for. It was the pride and delight of the city—the village had grown into this new dignity. John became a wealthy man, but for years he let no one handle his dear pets but himself.

His grand humanitarian scheme, the hospital, was carried into effect, and before long he extended his charities to both man and beast. He is married now, and doubly happy; and his wife and mother, and little ones, live in a grand house, and ride in a beautiful carriage; and he often tells the children how and why he was called the Little Horse-Doctor.

## THE POOR LITTLE HUNCHBACK.



T was a Sunday night rehearsal, a thing that did not often happen at this theater, and the scene-shifters, carpenters and property-boy were waiting for the company to come—and they generally took their own time on such an occasion—and feeling, as it was not in their contracts, they only did it at all out of compliment to the manager. They had all gathered around Joe, who knew more anecdotes about the great actors than they all put together; besides, he was the oldest employee there, and so was kind of looked up to.

“ You see I’ve been a night-hand at this theater ever since —let me see—yes, the second week it was built. They didn’t do things then quite so grand as they do now, and they weren’t as careful either—more’s the pity.” Here the speaker paused; his mind seemed to be wandering back to the past, and gradually a tear gathered in his eye. This seemed to bring him to the present again, and he hastily brushed it away, almost as if he were ashamed.

“ I—I promised to tell you something about our Ned; I may as well tell you now, while we are waiting, and get it off my mind, for it always gives me a queer sensation about my heart, and unsettles me for work for the night, whenever I even think how it happened.”

The men settled themselves anew on their boxes, trestles

and lumber, from whence, sending extra-long streams of tobacco juice into the sawdust boxes, they listened in silence.

"Well," continued Joe, taking his quid from his mouth, "I can remember when this building here, which is now counted as ever so handsome, was just like a ruin in a picture, the moon shining through the half-finished walls, that was built up high in some parts, and almost to the ground in others—it staid that way for two years, for lack of money, it was said; but the war came, business brightened up, and it was finished.

"They opened it with a good old-fashioned company from New York, in such plays as 'The School for Scandal,' but it didn't take worth a cent; you see the boss that owned the building ran the show, and as he hadn't any experience in that kind of business, he didn't know what the people wanted. I got in soon to help shift scences, and do little jobs around; the work was light, but the salary was lighter; they didn't pay much those days. The ballet-girls got but three dollars and a half a week, and had to find their own dresses even at that. And a poor-looking set they were, too, in their faded calicoes and dingy delaines. Some of them sewed to help out a living, but the manager didn't allow them to do so at rehearsal, so they had to wait around for ever so many hours, nearly every day, doing almost nothing. Hardly one had ambition enough to be studying, so as to be able to play a small part, if called upon. Some of them were quite pretty. One, I remember, had a child of her own to provide for, besides herself. Can you wonder, then, that in those days, especially when a theater happened to fall into outsider's hands, can you wonder that the despised ballet-girl slipped, sometimes, from virtue, and suddenly budded out in such gay clothes that she

was the envy and shame of the others? But, there, I wasn't intending to give a lecture, and things are better now.

" You see, it was the handsomest place in the city, and the boys hadn't got used to sit on red plush, for even the seats in the galleries were covered with it, and they couldn't eat their peanuts and squirt their tobacco juice in comfort in such an aristocratic place. So for months and months the galleries were nearly empty, and, consequently, there was hardly ever a bit of applause. I tell you, the actors like full galleries; that's what inspires them. Why, it was almost like going into a quiet meeting-house, in those days.

" Well, the manager saw something must be done; so he engaged a lot of supernumeraries and put on a spectacular piece. Now, you see, our little Ned was a real beauty—such golden hair; and eyes—so innocent and blue, like the sky! My wife had just got a place there to keep the dressing-rooms tidy. Well, she brought the boy one night to the theater, and the stage-manager noticed him, and said he'd engage him for one of the fairies in the spectacular, if she'd like. How proud and happy she was! She made him a little pair of gold shoes and the prettiest of wings, and a skirt of tarlatan, about as deep as your hand; then she did his hair up in little tight curls and frizzed it, and put one gold star in the center of his forehead, among his hair; his little legs were covered with silk stockings, and his arms and neck were shown in all their beauty. I tell you, there hadn't been such a pretty sight seen in this theater since it was built!

" The play was 'Cinderella.' I remember it so well. It had run a week, and had made quite a hit. The boys were beginning to come in the galleries, and things were lively for once.

"Cinderella's coach was drawn by two little bits of real live ponies, and Ned was the coachman, dressed quaintly in green and gold. The manager furnished this dress. The Cinderella was a sweet lady, who always had a kind word for every one. One day, just as the carriage was making the circuit of the stage, a crash sounded, and down it came, but fortunately no one was hurt, except Cinderella got a little bruise or two; but we were dreadfully frightened for little Ned. Ah! if we had only taken that as a warning, these white hairs wouldn't have been so plentiful, and I shouldn't look like a poor, broken-down man when I'm hardly in my prime, and my wife—but regrets, or even tears of blood, wouldn't alter anything. There was a pause, and the men shifted a little in their seats, but said nothing.

"My wife, she got to be quite a favorite with the company, and did little jobs of sewing for both the ladies and the gentlemen; and it helped our income considerably, for I didn't earn much during the day, being only assistant porter in a wholesale house; and Ned, why you would have thought the ladies would have kissed him to death; and the candy and pennies he got; his mother soon bought him a bank, and taught him always to put away a part of his money, also most of his salary. She said he should have something of his own when he was a man, so that he shouldn't have to begin at the lowest round of the ladder. You see she was sensible; she hadn't much education, but she picked up a sight being around the theater; of course she would hear a man swear once in a while, but she'd hear that anywhere else just as bad; then the folks always spoke good grammar; if they didn't, you know, the papers 'ud get after them, and they would often quote heroic bits from plays.

“Well, we were nearly through the second week of “Cinderella,” and everything was ready for the transformation scene, and little Ned was upon a cloud with some other fairies; when one, a great, tall girl, that had lately budded out, was talking to some of the men on the stage, and laughing at some of their jokes, and not attending to her business, she leaned too much on one side and upset the cloud; with a crash and a shriek, all the fairies fell to the stage. My wife, who had been watching our little darling, rushed on frantically and picked him up; but he was insensible, and she, thinking him dead, was wringing her hands and crying in agony. I was behind, working one of the revolving pillars, and hearing the crash, I suspected an accident, and came around just as she was hugging him to her breast, saying:

“‘ He is dead! oh! he is dead!’

“I thought I should have died, too, my anguish was so intense; but in a few minutes the little fellow opened his eyes, and put his hand to his neck; and then we found that his collar-bone was broken. But we both thanked God it was no worse, and wrapping him in a large shawl, we took him home. I wanted to carry him, but his mother said:

“‘ No, no; I can’t bear to let him out of my arms.’

“So I went for a doctor, and got home a moment after she did. Our Ned was moaning with pain, but the doctor was a good one, and soon had him comfortable, and in a little while he fell asleep; but my wife never closed her eyes. I thought that, by not noticing it, she would lay down and take a little nap some time, but whenever I opened my eyes, there she sat, her gaze fastened on the boy; so I got up and told her I’d watch, and she must take a little rest or she wouldn’t be able to hold up the next day; but she said:



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“ ‘ ‘ No, no; not to-night. I couldn’t sleep.’ ’

“ So I sat up with her; and at last, when the gray dawn stole in at the window, she dozed unconsciously in her chair.

“ Well, not to tire you, the boy soon got better of his hurt, but the manager would not pay the doctor’s bill, and even grumbled to pay his salary. It may have been the treasurer’s fault. I never could find out, for, you see, had he been a real manager, he would have done so willingly, and seen that things were better secured, that no such accident should happen again.

“ Poor little Ned didn’t seem to regain his strength, and was so pale that he looked like a snow-drop; yet he said one day, about three weeks after the accident:

“ ‘ ‘ Oh! dear mamma, let me go and be a little fairy again; they’ll fix that ugly old cloud so it won’t let us fall any more; please let me go ? ’ ’

“ But the piece was taken off, so we told him; and he seemed so sorry that my wife, who had hired another woman to take her place till Ned was better, went to the theater and told the good-hearted stage manager that little Ned wanted to come back; so he said he should be one of the pages in a court scene, and that his coachman’s suit, altered a little, would just do.

“ They’d all been so good to him, sending all sorts of little knick-knacks, and toys and jelly, and when he came back you never saw a child made so much fuss over; but he had something so winning and lovable about him that you wouldn’t wonder.

“ So it went on for a week, Ned playing the little page every night; but we noticed that he gave way to stooping, and when his mother said:

“ ‘ Oh, Ned, darling, don’t stoop; it makes me think you are ill;’ he would say his back hurt him, and then my wife would turn pale and tremble like a leaf. So I went privately and told the doctor, and on the pretense of taking Ned walking one day, when his mother couldn’t come, I took him to his office. There I learned that his spine was injured, and when I asked if it couldn’t be cured, the doctor shook his head sadly, and told me to try and bear it like a man, but that he feared, greatly feared, that my little boy would be a hump-back for the rest of his life!

“ I caught the table to save myself from falling; the hope and stay of my life seemed to have been cut away, and I felt like a man drowning, without a chance of rescue.

“ The doctor dashed a little water in my face, and placed me in a chair, where I sat speechless, like one dazed, till Ned came to my side and kissed me, saying:

“ ‘ Papa, don’t feel so bad about it. God was very good not to let me be killed.’

“ I burst out crying like a woman.” His voice was trembling so, that the other men felt as if they had lumps in their throats.

“ Well, as soon as I was able I took him home to his mother, but nothing could escape her quick eye.

“ ‘ What’s happened?’ she asked, ‘ you don’t seem to have enjoyed your walk very much; anything the matter with Ned?’

“ But Ned, seeing her anxious look and my pale face, ran to her, and, throwing his arms around her neck, said:

“ ‘ Don’t cry, too, mamma, for what the doctor says, because, you know, he might make a mistake.’

“ ‘ What did he say, darling?’

“ ‘ Only, that he feared your Ned would be a little hump-back.’

"Had a cannon-ball struck her she couldn't have fallen quicker, and her shriek sounds in my ears yet. Poor girl! poor girl! she's out of all her troubles now."

All the men were turning their heads, wiping their eyes in a quiet, half-ashamed way. At last the carpenter said:

"Well, did it come true?"

Joe nodded his head sadly, and then went on:

"You see, my wife had seen 'Richard the Third,' and had read somewhere that people deformed in body were often ugly and deformed in mind; so she shut herself up in her room, day after day, and cried as if her heart would break. But at last her good sense returned, for she saw she was only making the poor child very unhappy, and not helping him in the least; so she determined the beautiful, pure mind that God had given him should not grow deformed with the beautiful body, if care and prayers would prevent it. So she got a neighbor's child to stay with him while she did her work at the theater, and, telling the ladies what she wished, they loaned her books to improve herself. These she would bring home and read and explain to Ned, till he became familiar with the lives and sufferings of many great men. One day he said:

"But what shall I do, mamma; reading only won't let me earn money for you, and you have to work so hard?" Then his mother thought for a long time; then getting up and putting on her bonnet, asked him if he disliked to stay alone for a few moments; but he shook his head, and she soon returned with a cheap box of paints and told him he should be a painter; that she was going to study every spare moment, and would help him all she could. And she did study, copying every picture she could get hold of. I've often left her drawing away into the night, and woke up and found her still at it.

It was no use my telling her not to, for she would say she must know how, so as to teach Ned. Ned should be great, even if his poor little back was deformed. What would her life be worth, if Ned became vicious and idle and bad? No, no; she could endure a little work. And soon she began to draw and paint beautifully, and the boy followed right along after her.

“ Then he asked me to get the carpenter at the theater to make him some little wooden boxes and frames, and that he would pay him when he sold them. The carpenter did so, and said, ‘ Tell my little pet never to mind the pay.’ So he painted them beautifully with birds and flowers and quaint devices, and one day said to his mother:

“ ‘ Mamma, you have never taken me to the theater since this has been upon my back; you are not ashamed of your little Ned, are you? If I thought so, I should cry so hard; but that is not it, is it, mamma? You are afraid they’ll pity me, and that will make me feel bad. But, mamma, I want to go now, and I want to go alone; please let me.’

“ So she took him to the door of the theater and waited for him near by. When he came out his face was covered with smiles. They had, indeed, pitied him; but his dear mother had not heard them. They had called him an angel, and had kissed and wept over him; and bought all his pretty boxes and frames, and told him to bring more. So he told his dear mamma only the praises he had received, and filled her hands with money, and said it was all for her, and that he was going to make her a rich lady, for they all wanted to buy some of poor little Ned’s work, and said it was ever so pretty.

“ With so much encouragement, the boy got to paint quite a good picture, and there was always a sale for them. His

mother had told him how much better off he was than the poor man who was born without arms, yet became a celebrated painter, doing all the work with his feet; and Ned would smile, and say he must look funny working; then he would look grave, and say that God was very good to him, in giving him his dear mother and father, and letting him be able to paint; and that he would try to be a great man, too. So he lived for several years, when we noticed he did not paint so much, would lay on the sofa oftener, and did not eat with his usual relish; still, he never complained. I consulted the doctor, and after coming to see him, but ostensibly to see his pictures, he said he could do nothing for him.

“I now noticed, for the first time, that my wife’s hair was getting gray, and she had a bright, strange look in her eyes; and as the boy got weaker, the mother slept less, and gradually they seemed to fade together. The doctors could do nothing, and I could only watch and pray God to take me when they went. But he didn’t; for I saw our Ned, our darling Ned, die in his mother’s arms, saying:

“‘Good-bye, papa; meet us there!’”

“And she, with a smile on her face, put one arm around my neck, and kissing me, with a gentle sigh her spirit joined our boy’s.”

Some of the men were sobbing like children, and all were feeling so sorry for poor Joe. But the call-boy shouted, “First act! All ready to begin!” The spell was broken, and they were commonplace workmen again.

SEVEN LITTLE PAIRS OF SHOES;  
OR, THE POT OF GOLD.

HERE they stood, seven little pairs of well-blacked, well-patched shoes. Even Tootsum's was there—Tootsum had just learned to walk—and the blacking scarcely hid where the “big little pig” had almost worn a hole through the leather. And there by the fire, pinned to a warm towel, were the seven little pairs of stockings, for it was Saturday night, and the wearers of them had to go to Sunday school, except Tootsum and Jem, who were too young and noisy.

The clock ticked loudly, for it was very quiet; that and the singing of the tea-kettle, with a little snore now and then from the room, were the only sounds audible.

“I do wish John ‘ud come, it be gettin’ late and I be so sleepy that I can hardly keep my eyes open.” No wonder Mrs. Truehart felt sleepy, sitting so still after a hard day’s work, with only the kettle and the crickets for company.

The toast was ready, and the teapot, with its treasure of two spoonsful of tea, waiting for the hot water. Still John did not come. “I wonder why he be so late?” and Mrs. Truehart sat down again and gazed at the roses and laughing Cupid carved in the high, old-fashioned mantel-piece. “Most likely Mr. Sneezeum can’t pay him in money, and he has to take

another order and go miles to get it filled. I do hope it will be for victuals this time—it be hard to take 'em for French clocks and picter-frames." Here she looked at the one on the mantel, which was the delight of the whole house, but too grand for the surroundings. "Mr. Sneezeum says, 'Sell 'em, man, sell 'em.' He forgets the time it takes and the money we lose, but John be so shame-faced he can't say 'No.' 'Never mind,' he says, 'it will all be well when my ship comes home.' Ah! ships seldom come to poor people, but my John's a genius, and mayhap he'll sell one of his inventions yet."

The carved Cupid seemed to laugh at the idea, as she gently nodded until she fell asleep. And what bright dreams she had; real ships on real water, filled with satin, crape and tea, all the way from China. Then the scene changed, and she was walking in Golden California, treading on silver dollars. Then, as if transplanted by genii, she was in her own home, just where she was, and still gazing at the Cupid. The little fellow seemed to leave his carved roses, and to hop upon the floor with many an elfish grimace.

"Mrs. Truehart, Mrs. Truehart!" he cried in a little piping voice, "how would you like to find a pot of gold?"

"A pot of gold! a pot of gold!" she replied, wonderingly, "why, man, where could I get it?"

"Shall I tell her, Brownies?" and from every carved rose a little brown' head appeared nodding violently.

"Yes, yes, she's good; we've seen her time and again patching clothes, darning stockings, and even making little Tootsum's shoes."

"Yes, and she doesn't grumble when her husband comes home late and tells her he couldn't help it," cried a little fellow with a long beard and a dissipated look in his face.

"Well, then, Mother Truehart," cried Cupid, all of a grin, "pull away yon set of shelves, and in the little cupboard behind them you will find a pot of gold; by-by." And Brownies and Cupid all vanished, as she jumped up, rubbing her eyes.

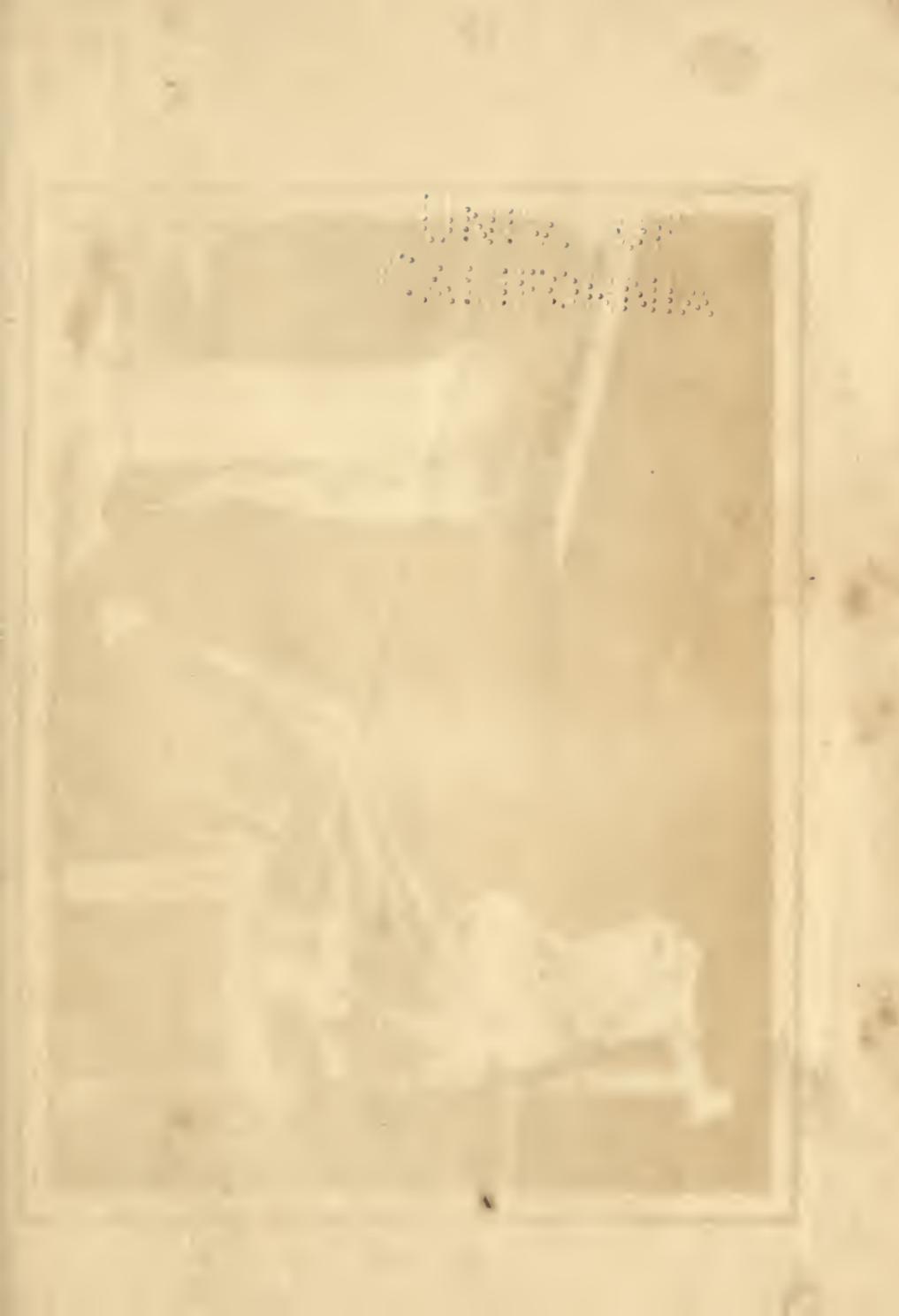
"What if it be true!" she said, going toward the shelves. "A pot of gold! Oh! then my John could get his inventions patented, and wouldn't our William look well as a gentleman! and Elizabeth, too, would be able to pick and choose from the best in a few years."

By this time she was pulling vigorously at the shelves, and suddenly they slid to one side and disclosed a small cupboard. She stopped in amazement, almost amounting to horror.

"Mayhap this be a temptation of the Evil One. John's patents might not be liked, so he'd fret and maybe go to the bad; and William, with lots of money, might take to the drink and cards, and, instead of the good, industrious lad he is now, break his mother's heart." She pushed the shelves back quickly, and, sitting in her big chair, cried: "No, no; if there be a pot of gold in yon cupboard, there let it stay, and never let it trouble me or mine!"\* She soon fell to thinking and dozing again: "Things be unequal in this world—the money to the rich, the children to the poor; more mouths to feed—to feed—than food to put—put—." And now she was fast asleep; but her dreams did not take her from home.

It was still Saturday night, and she had worked hard all day with scarcely a mouthful of food, for John had lately

\* My own grandmother had such a dream, without the fairy element, and pulling the shelves away discovered the cupboard, but never opened it. This was in Bristol, England, after the riots there, during which time much money was secreted in out-of-the-way places.





been paid in orders that were very unsalable, and she couldn't hear the children ask for bread in vain, so had gone without herself, and was hungry and unhappy.

"Ah! well, if there were less mouths to feed, one wouldn't be compelled to go hungry and wear such shabby clothes." So in her dream she went on fretting and complaining.

"Look!" said the carven Cupid, not laughing now, but sternly pointing to the row of shoes.

She looked—and the line was broken! There were vacant places; three pairs of shoes were gone—William's, Elizabeth's and Tootsum's. She turned quickly to the stockings—only four pairs!

"Dead!" said the Cupid. And she awoke with a start of terror.

The fire had burned low, the kettle had stopped its singing; she went to the shoes in an agony of fear.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Thank God, they are all here!"

Then stirring the fire and snuffing the candle, she hurried into the next room. All her little ones were sleeping peacefully. She kissed Tootsum so joyfully that it almost awoke the little fellow. Then she walked quietly into William's den—a corner of the room divided off and walled up with wrapping paper. In it there was a door, and a window that looked out of the big window, and all was as neat as a pin. She touched her lips gently to the boy's forehead, for he was a light sleeper.

"My brave boy!" she murmured; "to lose you and the others would be worse than the worst poverty!"

A rousing knock, and a cheery voice, calling: "Betsy, open the door!" completed her new-found happiness.

"Ah, John! I've had such a bad dream; but you see, I was tired and hungry. Oh, I'm so glad you've come!" and they kissed heartily.

"Well, well, lass; I don't wonder you're hungry, and had bad dreams, not having tea yet; and its past ten o'clock; but this'll make amends." And from his capacious pockets he drew a string of sausage, a pot of marmalade, some tea, and a paper of cakes.

"What a treat, John! it must have been a good order this time."

"Aha! lass, it's better than that! But put on the sausages, and I'll tell you while we are taking our tea. We're fashionable, this time, for its so late that our dinner is almost supper;" and he laughed a hearty laugh as he hung up his great coat, and washed his face and hands.

Soon the sausage was hissing and spluttering on the fire. That and the aroma of the tea and toast filled the room.

"Well, wife, what do you think? I've sold my key?"

"La!"

"Yes. Mr. Sneezeum said the idea of the key altering while it was being turned in the lock, and its having to be readjusted before it could unlock again, was quite new, and he'd give me fifty pounds for it, as I was too poor to get it patented, and it was too good an invention to be lost. Betsy, I thought of you and the little ones, so took the money, although I knew it was worth much more. I was thankful, too, for it was a beginning and we don't know what it may lead to; so, you see, my ship's coming home!"

She thought of her dreams and murmured softly to herself:

"Oh! this is my pot of gold!"

"May I come in?" asked William, standing in the doorway,

in his shirt and trowsers and stocking feet. "The sausages made such a noise, and smelt so good, that they woke me up."

"Yes, come in, lad, and eat supper with us." So the boy put on his jacket, and taking his mother's slips from under the bed—you see he was a privileged character, being the son and heir—he sat down to the table.

"Whew! sausages, marmalade, cake! What's up? Ah! didn't I hear something about a key, or did I dream it?"

"No, no, lad, its all true. Father has sold his key, and for such a fortune, fifty pounds!"

"Aha! I knew you'd come out all right, father!" and William got up and shook his father's hand warmly, and would have kissed him, only he felt ashamed.

"I'm in luck, too, father. I did not have courage to tell mother till you came. You know the cabinet-maker's on the way to the shop? Well, when first you brought your clock home, I thought I'd like to be able to carve such pretty figures as are on it, so I took a broken knife, an old file and a piece of wood and went to work. Going by the cabinet-maker's I noticed some carved chairs that didn't look much better than mine, so I showed him what I had done, and he said if I could manage the chair-backs he'd give me a shilling apiece. Father, I hope you won't think hard of me for doing this without first telling you, but I intended to do it at night, and not give up my place."

"Hard of you! No, no, lad, I like to see one have a mind of his own when it's for good. Now, let's see what you've done?"

William went to his "den," and from underneath his bed he brought out a box. How his parents admired the contents! There were a few nicely-carved little figures, a vase made of a knot of wood and some twigs, and a pretty little frame.

“Why, we’ve got quite a genius in the family. Lad, when did you do these?”

“In the leisure moments I had in the shop.”

“Well, Betsy, you see that order for the French clock wasn’t so bad after all; it started our boy on what may prove a fortune to him.”

How happy William felt as his father patted him on the shoulder, and said he was proud of him.

Was there ever a supper tasted like this one? Was ever tea so fragrant, or sausages so savory? But, then, “no one can cook like mother,” was William’s thought. It was well, William, you had no wife to tell it to. No one felt sleepy. Their eyes were too wide-awake with happiness. So father wandered off into telling anecdotes; old, old anecdotes that they had heard twenty times before. Yes, O how fresh and funny they seemed that night, and how they all laughed, especially at the dentist pulling out the clerk’s tooth, while the finely-dressed lady ran off with the shawl; for father made such a funny face at the pulling that one could not help making a funny face, too, in sympathy. William suggested that father should sing “The Bay of Biscay,” but he said it would wake the children, besides it was so near Sunday morning that it wouldn’t be proper.

“It’s time for bed, William; so, good night, lad.”

“Good night, father; good night, mother,” and he kissed her and went reluctantly to bed, where he lay awake a full hour, thinking and building fine castles for the future, and of how a bright little face peeped out of the castle windows—“Lady Maude,” as he called her—who often came to the shop with her governess to buy cakes as they were on their daily walk. “Who knows,” he thought; “I might become a famous

sculptor some day, and not so much beneath her, for talent is nature's patent of nobility." You see, he had read books.

And now the angel of sleep spread her soft wings over the household, and the dreams were only as light and sweet as the feathers that fell from her wings.

How gloriously the sun arose next morning! and what a patterning of little feet! Soon the glad tidings was spread among the children, and they all thought their fortunes made. Even Tootsum ran about saying: "Pa, pa, key!"

Soon the house was quiet again, the older children having gone to Sunday school. Jem was drawing pictures in a corner, and Tootsum being asleep. Mrs. Trueheart swept up the room; this can't be neglected, even on Sunday, where there are so many children; watered her three pots of flowers, then prepared the usual plain dinner, for she let Elizabeth go to church and remained at home herself, as one had to. Just before church was out, such a surprise came!

Rap! rap! at the door. She opened it, all of a flutter.

"This is for Mrs. Trueheart;" and before she could speak, from amazement, she had taken the tray, and the man was gone. A smoking roast of beef and baked potatoes, a huge plain pudding and sauce—a dinner fit for a king!—and dear John had ordered it without even telling her, the kind heart.

And now the door burst open and they all poured in, John and her darlings. How their eyes sparkled as they saw the smoking dinner! for it's pretty true, that the way to men and children's hearts is through their stomachs.

"Mother, is it Christmas?" asked little Annie.

"No, goose, no," said Jack, "don't 'ee see the puddin' got no plums in it."

"John, this was very kind of you. What a treat it is to the young ones."

It took but a few moments for bonnets and hats to be laid aside, and seven happy faces looking at father and mother and —the dinner.

“What nice gravy! Don’t ‘ee forget some on my plate,” said Susie, impatient for her turn to come.

“This brown slice is for mother. Betsy, you are not a bit English in your beef.”

She laughed and said:

“No, I don’t like it rare, but it’s well to have some one to eat the brown, so as to have no waste, like Jack Spratt and his wife.”

They all laughed heartily at this, even to Jem, who had a treasured, but torn, book of Mother Goose, most of which was mystical lore to him, especially the puzzles of how the cow got over the moon, and how the four-and-twenty blackbirds could sing, after being baked in a pie.

To make their happiness complete, mother gave them marmalade to eat on their pudding, and a cup of weak tea each; not that the tea was nice, but it was like big people. So they would have drank it, nice or not, except Tootsum, who made a wry face. Jem said:

“It’s dood, Toots, dood. Dink it.”

“Dood?” said Tootsum, and took another sip; but to show he didn’t believe it, he turned the rest of it on the floor.

“Bad boy,” said Elizabeth, wiping it up.

“Don’t call him bad to-day, Lizzie,” said William, “because we’re so happy.”

Then mother gave them a few cakes to put in their pockets. There was very little of the pudding left, I can tell you, or of the beef, either. So the dishes were washed up and put away, and father told them some curious facts about other countries

that children love to hear, while mother was smartening herself. Then they all took a pleasant walk upon the downs, father and mother always having something new to tell them.

This Sunday was a bright, bright one in their calendar.

Years have passed away; Elizabeth has married a man she is proud of, and Susie is just budding into a pretty young lady, for they are well off now, and are all getting the best of educations, for father's inventions are very popular, and gentlemen take off their hats to him in the streets. Mother has her amber satin dress for best, and looks the picture of motherly happiness. William has become a celebrated wood-carver, now and then doing something in marble. He is acquainted with "Lady Maude" now, and is making a fine statue of her. Who knows what it may lead to? He may yet see her sunny face peeping out of his castle window—home.

## MINNETTE.



ND this poor young girl lived on the fifth floor of a New York tenement-house, working night and day to earn enough to keep soul and body together, and a roof to shelter her. Her large, gray eyes looked wistful and eager out of a pale face and masses of dark brown hair. She seemed to have but one friend in the world, an old opera singer, whose singing days were long since past, who came one evening each week and took tea with her.

As she carried her work to and from the shop she caught glimpses of the great world, and it fascinated her. Oh! if she could only become somebody—not a poor, dull atom that peoples' eyes passed over, as if she were space, but somebody, the very sight of whom should make the beholder's face look glad; somebody whose very name should cause all hearts to thrill with a pleasant emotion! But it was only a far-away, impossible dream, for with neither time nor money, what could she become different to what she was—a slop-shop girl?

It was Saturday evening, and her poor little room was in order, and the tea and toast, with the additional luxury of three dried herrings, awaited Madam Therese's coming. Sometimes the repast was varied by a little cheese, or a tiny pat of butter, or fruit or vegetables when they were in season, but nothing costing over a few cents, for to a woman earning

but a pittance, even that little additional expense is quite an item, and she would not go in debt, even if she had sometimes to almost suffer hunger. Soon she heard the old lady's step, accompanied by a gentle puffing, for four pairs of stairs were no easy matter for a stout person to climb.

"Well, child, how d'ye do?" and she kissed her on the forehead, and quickly sat down in the offered chair. "Those stairs seem longer every time I come. I wish you could afford to move down a flight."

"I wish I could, too, for your sake, but money is very hard to earn, so I'll have to be contented with what I have."

"That's why I say you ought, you must, find time to learn to be a singer!" Minnette smiled faintly.

"Ah! Madam Therese, who would wish it more than I? But for every hour I stopped sewing to sing, I should have to lose a meal, and that would soon make it impossible for me to either sing or work, for one must eat, you know, even if they have to go half-clothed, and live in dirt. I would willingly sew far into the night, if that would help matters, but light and fire are expensive items; then the loss of sleep unfits me for the next day's work; I've tried it. But let us eat while the toast is warm; we can talk and eat, too."

So the old lady pulled off her worn gloves, and drew on her lace mits, laid aside her shawl and bonnet, and sat down with much ceremony.

"You see, my dear, when I was in the opera, I was young, and, well—yes, I was considered handsome, too, but I never was leading *prima donna*, nor ever expected to be, on account of a slight sore-throat that I was always liable to; it seemed to be hereditary. The tea is very nice to-night, my dear."

"What a pity!"

“ The tea ? ”

“ Oh, no ! but to think you should have had anything to curb your ambition. I believe it would have made me perfectly miserable, for if I could not hope to become better and better, and one day reach the very top, there would be nothing to sustain me ! ”

“ And yet you live and drudge here every day, without even hoping for a better future.”

“ Ah ! but with you it was so different. You were already on your road to fame, and free from the terrible chains that seem to hold me down to poverty.”

“ Yes, I had much happiness. My salary was sufficient to support myself and a delicate sister, also to lay by a little ; I had learned to be thoughtful for her sake. We had two pleasant rooms, within a pretty long walking distance of the theater, and sister helped with the work. Many a time when I had studied a difficult new part, and had taken extra care of my throat, the manager would pat my shoulder, and tell me I had done well. Ah ! but those were proud and happy nights for me ! And because I did not expect to become great, the other ladies who all hoped one day to rival Jenny Lind were not jealous or ugly to me. Ah ! those were happy days ! ” and Madam Therese sighed, and seemed to forget Minnette’s very presence. At last she roused up.

“ Why, child, my eyes were turned, and I was reading all over my book of memory ; but—half cup of tea, if you please —thanks. Let us finish, and then while you are clearing away, let us sing.”

Oh ! what a sweet bird-like voice ! so thrilling, too ; no wonder the old lady wished her to become a singer ; and no wonder the girl felt hopeless in the clutches of poverty, with such a gift and not a dollar to cultivate it.

Madam Therese would occasionally stop her, and show her how to correct a trill or prolong a note, for though her voice was gone, or rather the dying embers only remained, still she knew the theory perfectly, and even gave a few cheap lessons in the neighborhood where she lived.

When the dishes were done, Minnette took her sewing and so continued her singing. Now and then her hands would pause and keep time with the music.

"Oh, Madam Therese, if I only knew as much as you do, I would try to get a place as chorister in the opera to-morrow."

"In the chorus! No, indeed, dear; you could just as easily get a place to sing parts, and they would think a great deal more of you for aiming high. As for the chorus, you could do that now; then you would have time to study the theory of music without starving yourself to death."

But Minnette looked at her only best dress, a cheap black alpaca, without overskirt or ruffle, ornamented with only two bias folds; and a little white muslin at the neck. She looked at this dress hung behind the door, and sighed to think what a poor appearance it would make even among the chorus-singers, let alone the more prominent performers.

"No, Madam Therese, I will not try yet; I must get a little money ahead to buy at least a new dress and hat; you know there is a great deal in appearances; one feels more confidence, too, in a nice new dress."

"Ah! that is too true, child, in this profession as well as others. A manager would sooner help one who is independent of him, can dress well and has a bank account, than he would give the pittance of a salary to genius in poverty. When I was young I knew of a case that made a lasting impression on my memory.

"A young singer who was a great favorite, and very popular on the stage and off, got married, and for several years left the stage. Her husband having a long fit of illness, and several little children claiming her attention, she could not resume her profession and help provide for her family as she so much wished to; so some of her friends proposed that she should have a benefit; she should attend to the details, and they would buy the tickets. That would be so easy, she thought, as she had sung gratuitously for so many; in fact had never refused when a brother or sister artist had claimed her aid.

"'They will do the same for me,' she told me, joyously, 'for this will be the only time I have ever asked their help, and they are a generous set.' So she wrote pretty notes, and without waiting for the replies, she told her friends her benefit would be on such a night. I had already studied my part; she had been kind to me, and I was only too happy to show her I remembered it. I met her a few days after; the joy had gone from her voice as she said:

"'Ah, I have been so mistaken; they all refuse, politely, of course—are so sorry, and all that, and one did not think it worth her while to reply at all. And they knew I needed it so.' She wiped the tears from her eyes with a quick dash of her hand, and went home to her sick husband."

"And didn't she have the benefit?" asked Minnette, very much interested.

"No, she gave it up in despair, and by hard labor got a couple of scholars to whom she gave singing lessons, often with her delicate little fretful baby in her arms. I've had many a good cry about it, though she was so brave and never uttered a complaint. A short time after I noticed in the pa-

pers a long list of names of those volunteering for some unknown person's benefit, and among them were the very ones who had such ready and flimsy excuses for not singing, when by doing so they would have been performing Heaven's divine mission of charity. It made her almost cynical when she read it, and she determined from that time she would ask a favor of no one, but depend on her own hands and brain.

"That's why I want you to leave this drudgery as soon as possible, and lay by a little so as to be beholden to nobody for favors."

Minnette sighed; she had no reply to make, but she soon roused herself, and said:

"Dear Madam Therese, let us sing again, for your story has made me feel quite sad."

So she began a plaintive aria from an opera that Madam Therese had taught her, and sang it with all the pathos her young heart felt. The old lady listened in pleased surprise, and let her finish without an interruption, quietly wiping the tears from her eyes.

Out in the street she had another listener—an old, eccentric gentleman, with white hair and a broad-brimmed hat, and clothes of the cut of a quarter of a century ago. He paused a moment, then walked on, then paused again, returned, and listened till the music ceased; then he suddenly entered the house and ascended the stairs. After the first flight, which was lit by the lamp in the street, all was darkness, and the old gentleman stumbled heavily against a door; it was opened quickly, and a shrill voice asked:

"What d'ye want?"

"In what room does that girl live who sings so sweetly?"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, askin' a respectable

woman such a question. Gray-headed, too! Oh, you shameless old sinner!" The frowsy head disappeared, and the door was slammed in his face.

"The vixen's crazy!" the old gentleman muttered, as he stumbled on his way up stairs.

The next flight was lit by a broken, smoky lamp. He stopped to listen, but all was silence; so he knocked at the first door he came to. A pleasant face appeared, and he asked gently: "Does the person who sings so sweetly, live here?"

"No; she is a poor sewing-girl, and lives on the fifth floor."

"Thank you, madam," and he pressed some money into her hand.

"Oh! sir, don't pay me for such a little service. I like the young girl, and—and I'm sure you'll be kind to her, for you have a good face."

"Do you know her name?"

"I've heard the children in the house call her Minnette, and that's all I know." Again thanking her he climbed up the rest of the weary stairs, and as he paused at the top, the singing commenced again; he waited till the song was ended, then knocked at the door. Minnette started nervously, but did not delay to open it.

"Are you the girl that sings so sweetly?" he asked her, abruptly. She blushed deeply as she replied:

"I sing, sir."

"Tut, tut! don't pretend you don't know you sing well. Who's your teacher?"

"Madam Therese is so kind—" But Madam, seeing perhaps a chance for business, said: "Minnette, can't you ask the gentleman in, and give him a chair? He must need one after climbing all those stairs."

The old gentleman looked at the grotesque figure that was a match to his own, and smiled.

“Are you her mother, madam?”

“No, sir, I’ve not that honor; I’m a single woman.”

He entered, and Minnette handed him a chair. She quietly sat on the box that contained the wood and coal.

“Are you an orphan?” Minnette bowed her head. “Ah, poor girl; no one to look after you. With that voice, you ought to make your fortune.” Here Madam Therese thought to help her friend. “She is very poor, sir, and has no time or money to take lessons. I visit her once a week, and we sing together; that’s all the instruction she has from me.”

“Ah! how much do you earn a week by sewing?”

“About three dollars and a half; but I have to work every moment, and sometimes far into the night.”

“Three dollars and a half! And what do you pay for this elegant room; not much, I should think?”

“Two dollars a week, sir; I could get it cheaper if I had furniture of my own.”

“I hope they don’t call this furniture!” and he looked at the carpet from which all color had fled, the broken stove, the leafless table, the bureau minus the little top-drawers and looking-glass, and the bedstead and clothes old and faded.

“Rent is very high in the city; if it was not for that, I could get along very well.”

“Poor girl, poor girl; with that voice, too! Madam, how much could this girl live on without working, and devote herself to music?”

“Well, sir, do you mean to live as she does now?”

“Tut, tut; this isn’t living, it’s only existing; no, in a better neighborhood and lower down.”

"Where I live it's a little better, but not so near the heart of the city; there she could get a much better room for twelve dollars a month, and on the third floor, too."

"Then what could she board for?"

"Well, sir, if my living would satisfy her, I could board her cheaper than any one else, and get a few extras for her; say three dollars and a half a week." She had an eye to business.

"Well, you seem kind to her--"

"Oh, sir, she is my only friend! Since my mother died, my life would indeed have been dreary, if it had not been for her."

"Well, well, then you would like to go with her; you shall, and I will pay for your lessons."

"Sir, I hope you will excuse me, but I give a few lessons, being formerly connected with the Grand Opera."

"She seems to have got along very well under your instruction so far. I'll give you five dollars a week till she gets beyond what you can teach her, then I'll see what is to done. Mind, I'm not going to give you all this money, Miss—Minnette, your name is, isn't it? I am only going to lend it you, till you become a great singer, then I'll trust to your word to pay it back."

Minnette stood like one in a dream; it was all so sudden, she could not believe but that it was some cruel jest, or that her hearing had deceived her.

"Well, what do you say?" asked the old gentleman.

"Oh, sir, what can I say? It seems like a glimpse of Heaven you have opened to me! Oh, I thank you so—so—" but she burst into tears and could say no more.

So he gave Madam Therese a twenty-dollar bill to commence

with, got her receipt for the same, and told her to keep an account, also to get Minnette to, took her address, gave his own, and put on his hat.

“I shall come to see you soon; you had better move to-morrow. I leave her in your care, madam. Good night!” and he was gone like a good genius in a fairy tale.

The next day how different life appeared to Minnette, and how strange not to have to sit and sew all day long.

“Oh, Madam Therese, how good you are! If you had not spoken for me so kindly, I could not have said one word to the gentleman, and should still be in that poor room, sewing.”

“No, indeed, child, ’t was your voice that did it; and now you must not disappoint the gentleman, but study hard, so that when he comes he shall notice how you have improved.”

So she studied long and faithfully each day, and helped Madam Therese in the work of her two little rooms, for she said she must do something for exercise; then they would take a long walk together, and soon the roses came into Minnette’s cheeks, and the pitiful look left her eyes, and she began to live. They wondered why Mr. Fredericks did not come—that was the good old gentleman’s name. More than two weeks had passed, and the twenty dollars was nearly gone, so it seemed as if it was going to turn out worse than a dream after all, for to go back to her old life now would be cruel indeed.

One day when she felt particularly well and happy, and had been singing in very joyousness, her cheek flushed and her eyes sparkling, some one knocked at the door; it was Mr. Fredericks. How glad she was to see him; she grasped both his hands, and thanked him again and again for his kindness.

“What! is this my pale little girl? Look at the roses! and how nicely she’s dressed, too,”—it was the poor alpaca.

“Where’s the old lady?” Madam Therese hastened from the other room. “Madam, you’ve done well; I thank you.”

“Oh! but hear her sing!” and the old lady sat at the ancient piano, and proudly played the prelude to one of the grand masses by Beethoven, and Minnette sang; and how she sang! The old gentleman fairly embraced Madam Therese in delight.

“I thought I should not live in vain! Why I’m a Christopher Columbus. I’ve discovered greater than a continent—a perfect human voice!” Then he kissed Minnette on the forehead, and told her she was a good girl, and he was proud of her. He went away soon after, leaving more money, saying he would not let it be so long before he came again. And Minnette studied, and grew prettier.

In little over a week Mr. Fredericks came again, but Minnette noticed that although he was so glad to see her, and was as lively as ever, yet he appeared to be suffering. She did not like to ask him if he felt ill, but when he went away it troubled her, for she began to love the old gentleman like her own father, whom she had lost when quite young.

Two weeks passed, and no Mr. Fredericks; then a few days, and still he did not come.

“Madam Therese, I feel as if something was the matter with good Mr. Fredericks, and I am determined I will go and see.” So they both put on their things, and taking an omnibus, were soon at his door. After ringing the bell, they waited sometime before they heard a sound. Minnette’s heart turned sick. Suppose he were dead! But shuffling footsteps approached the door, and after much fumbling with the key, it was finally unlocked and opened.

“Is Mr. Fredericks ill? Oh, I fear he is!” The woman

looked at her strangely. "Be you a relation?" she asked, slowly.

"No, no; but I love him like one; he has been kind to me; tell me he is not dead."

A faint voice called:

"Mrs. Watkins, let her come up;" and Minnette fairly flew to where the sound came from. What a sight met her eyes! The old gentleman lay white and thin, almost to a skeleton.

"Oh, my dear friend, why did you not send me word you were ill? I am so sorry."

"Well, child, I hoped to get well without clouding your first bright days, but—but I'm not so sanguine now. I'm glad you've come; it seems to have eased my pain already." And Minnette, with the quick instinct of a woman, saw how desolate the old man was; no wife or child cheered that house, she knew immediately; so taking off her hat, she made herself at home, and with Madam Therese made the room more home-like and cheerful, letting in a little fresh air and sunshine, for which the old man thanked them.

She told Mr. Fredericks she intended to stay there as long as he was ill, if he would only let her, and she begged he would. His eyes filled with tears, and he said:

"Yes, yes, I shall die happier." Poor Minnette choked her tears down, and tried to speak cheerfully:

"I pray God that you will soon be well, dear, dear friend." She flattered and petted the surly old housekeeper, till even she began to wear a pleasant face. But the doctor gave her no hopes of the old gentleman's recovery.

How hard it is to watch day by day for death to come, without the faintest hope of being able to delay his dreaded visit. Each day he made her sing for him, and said it repaid him a thousand fold for what he had done.

On a beautiful, clear day, as Madam Therese sat sewing and Minnette was gently fanning the invalid, he said very faintly:

“ Give me your hand, Minnette, and—and sing to me that plaintive song I listened to in the street.” She knew what he meant, for he had often told her how he came to be her friend.

She sang, but the tears ran down her cheeks so that she had to pause.

“ Don’t cry, little one. I’ve—I’ve not forgotten you. Sing on.” And she sang till he seemed to doze, then she stopped; but he opened his eyes.

“ Good-by, Madam Therese—take—take care of her—kiss me, Minnette—good girl—” and as she kissed him his spirit fled.

We have all sorrowed for the dead; we know the sickening pain; Minnette was nearly heart-broken.

When all was over a gentleman waited on her, and saying he was Mr. Fredericks’ lawyer, read her his will. She was his heiress, and he congratulated her on being possessor of money and estates valued at three hundred thousand dollars. Madam Therese was not forgotten, and neither was the ugly old house-keeper. He had left her several charities to attend to, and said she could do as she pleased about her future, but that a public life, without a father or brother, was full of snares and temptations. So she took this as his dying wish, and only sung for charity, and to make her own and her friends’ lives happy.

She kept a magnificent establishment, and placed Madam Therese at its head as her dear second mother.

And the rain fell on the old man’s grave, and Minnette’s tears watered the flowers that grew there.

## HALF A MILLION OR THE BABY.



YOUNG wife sat gazing wistfully into the fire. That afternoon a friend had visited her whom she had known in her school days. They were married, too, on the same night; one for love, the other for—well—money. She had been dressy, chatty and gay, fairly deluging Ellen with an account of all the beautiful things she had, and the parties and operas she had attended.

“But, then, you have this dear little Cupid,” she had said, “and he makes amends for the lack of many things, does he not?”

“Oh! yes; but you see, my darling husband (they had been married only a little over a year) has to work so hard, and for such a pittance, too, he does not have time to even take his dinner at home; and many a day I do not see him from early morning till late at night.”

“Oh! poor dear! and see how hard your hands are getting; it is too bad! no servant, no nurse, no pretty dresses; well, you did not make a very good bargain, after all.”

“But I love my husband,” she had answered, sweetly; and her friend replied:

“No doubt you do; but then you are so tied down by little Cupid here, that you can go nowhere and have no enjoyment outside of your little home; which, by the way, is cosy enough,

if it isn't elegant. But, after all, I think I would rather have my half million than your baby."

So she had left her thinking, thinking; and as her husband did not come home at the usual hour, she had time enough to make herself very miserable; you know we can think ourselves into a great deal of imaginary unhappiness. That is one of the ways that "Satan finds some mischief still," etc.

By and by the baby woke, and for once his cries irritated her, and she took him up with a jerk that made him cry still louder.

"Cross baby!" she said petulantly, and sat down without trying to amuse or feed him. So he cried himself to sleep again, and she sat thinking, till she felt herself a much-abused, miserable woman.

Rap! rap! came at the door, and, before she could open it, in walked an elegant lady.

"I've come for the baby," she said.

"What baby?" asked Ellen.

"Why, that," pointing to the baby in her lap. "Did you not wish, just now, for a half million instead of him?"

"Oh! no, I—"

"You did. You shall have the money to-morrow, and I'll take the baby."

"I cannot, indeed I—"

"Oh yes, you can; your fine clothes and parties will soon satisfy you. He will be well taken care of," and the lady held out her arms.

"I—I—" but there was something strange about the lady's eyes that seemed to compel her, so she laid the baby in her arms.

"Now get me his clothes."

She did so.

"Oh, let me keep a shoe and stocking, and one of his dear little shirts," she asked, pitifully.

"Not one," the lady replied.

"Just his little stocking, then," she pleaded. "I've kissed his little feet so often. Only his little stocking!"

So the lady flung a shoe, stocking and shirt into her lap, and was gone.

She ran to the window to call her back, for she did not even know her name, or where she could go to see her baby. But too late! She sat down again, very, very miserable, till her thoughts turned to the promised half million.

Now her dear husband would not have to work so hard. She could have him, too, every evening. Then what little cozy dinners they would have. "Hal" was fond of something nice, but he didn't get it often, poor fellow. "His old mother, dear soul, shall come and live with us. I can get along with her, if she is my mother-in-law."

So she mused. Then her friend's highly-colored pictures of balls, operas and parties came into her mind, and she thought she would enjoy them, too.

A quick step aroused her. "Oh, what will Harry say?" And she turned pale as she jumped up to give her kiss of welcome.

The shoe, stocking and shirt fell to the floor.

"Ah! Just put old Chub to bed?"

"I—"

"Well, wifey, kept you waiting, haven't I? Couldn't help it. They are so busy at the store. I'm hungry, I can tell you. Haven't had time to eat since breakfast."

So Ellen took the frying-pan from the fender and put it

back on the fire for a few moments, and the saucepan with the potatoes, so they were soon smoking hot on his plate, and he ate with a will, but she scarcely tasted anything except half a cup of tea.

“What’s the matter, Nell? Been hungry so long that you’ve lost your appetite? Don’t wait so long, pet, another time.”

“You know, Harry, that—I—don’t like to eat without you; the food doesn’t taste near so good.”

“How quiet Chub sleeps. He doesn’t even move; and he’s terrible at that; takes after you, pet, eh?” And he laughingly pinched her chin. But she could not smile.

“Why, what’s the matter with you to-night; not ill, are you, Nell?”

“Oh, it’s nothing; I—”

“Just a little blue, eh? Because I did not come home sooner? You’ll get over it in a minute or two.”

And he walked to the cradle and put back the little lace curtains that she had knit.

“Not here? Oh, you’ve put him in our bed. Old rascal, I’ll catch your little toes.” And he moved his hand gently up the bed, but the cold sheet was all he touched. A thrill ran through him. “Ellen, where’s the baby?”

“Oh! Harry, you know we are so poor, and you have to work so to keep us all, that I—I—”

“My God! you have not killed him?”

“Oh! no, no; but—but—”

“What have you done with him?”

“Well, Belle was here, and told me what beautiful things she had—and—”

“What has that to do with the baby?”

“I have sold him!”

Harry burst out laughing. “Now I know you are playing. Really, you frightened me at first.” But she told him the whole story, and showed him the empty drawer. Then he asked the lady’s name, and where she lived, so that he could go immediately and get the baby back again. But when she knew neither her name or residence, he cried: “We have been robbed!” and walked the floor like a man distracted.

What a miserable night they passed in tears, reproaches and regrets. The morning came at last, as it always does, no matter how wretched we are, and with it soon came the postman. He handed Ellen a letter sealed with black. An uncle had died in the Indies and left her half a million!

“Now if Chub, my Chub, were only here, this might make us happy.”

“Oh, Harry, I would crawl on my hands and knees a thousand miles to get him back; but it is too late.”

So they moved into a stately house, and Belle came to congratulate them, and she took Ellen—whom she would call Ellenore now—under her especial care, bringing her dressmakers, hairdressers, jewelers, dancing master, everything necessary to convert her into a fashionable lady.

Harry went into business, but grew paler every day.

Ellen went to balls, parties, theaters, everywhere, to drown the voice of conscience; but Harry steadily refused to accompany her. So Belle was her constant friend and companion.

Harry grew so absent-minded and unfit for business that he soon failed, and lost all the capital he had invested in it.

But Ellen seemed mad for excitement, and gave great dinners and masquerades, so that her house became the most popular in town. But Harry always kept his room. She was

the belle wherever she went. Her wit, beauty and amiability were the theme of every tongue; but a great sorrow lay deep hidden away in her heart, the loss of her baby. Harry brooded over it, while she tried, by her wild pleasures, only to stop that terrible thinking, thinking, which one beloved preacher said he believed to be the punishment of the great hereafter.

The time came when Harry could not leave his bed; then Ellen showed herself the most devoted and patient of wives. Harry had thought her heartless, and his love had nearly died out; but her devotion revived it, as a breath will a dying ember. One morning he said to her:

“ Pet, I dreamed last night of Chub. He seemed to be waiting for me on the bank of a dark river. The halo of the light that surrounded him made the way clear, and I passed over fearlessly. I can die willingly now, Nell.”

“ Oh! darling, darling, stay with me a little longer, for when you are gone the world will be a terrible place to live in.” And she shudderingly hid her face in the bed-clothes.

“ Why, Nell, I thought the half million brought you great happiness, and that poor Chub was even less to you than as if he had never been.”

“ Oh, Hal, I’ve hid away my sorrow from earthly eyes. But One has seen it. He has heard my heart cry out to Him in the stillness of the night. But, darling, I did not wish to add to your sufferings. And so you thought me heartless; I know you did, but I was only trying not to think.”

“ Nell, do you know, I think he is dead.”

She gave a low cry, but it told the death of the hope she had had of one day finding him.

Harry lingered for a few weeks, and then breathed his last

as gently as a child. Belle came to console poor Ellen, and as soon as possible hurried her away to the continent. She looked very pale, and was so nervous that she could not remain two days in one place. Here her agent wrote that she had better be a little careful, as the money was diminishing very fast. But she answered back “not to annoy her,” as she hated money matters.

When her year of mourning was over, Belle led her into all sorts of follies and extravagances. Again her agent wrote she must retrench, as some of his speculations for her had proved failures; but she did not heed his advice, till one day her check was refused, and she had to sell her diamonds to get home. There her agent called on her with the unpleasant intelligence that her house was to be sold the next day, and there was not money enough left to buy it in.

A thousand dollars and a few fine dresses were all she had now of her half million. As she had no particular talent for anything by which she could earn her living, she went to a boarding-house and there stayed till the money and dresses were gone and she had but five dollars in her purse.

At last she seemed to feel the necessity of doing something; so she hired a room—you can imagine how miserable it was furnished—and tried to get sewing to do, that next resort to suicide with many; but it was hard to get and ill-paid. So many a day she went hungry. Belle had lost sight of her, so she had no friend to go to. “No sewing to be got.” What would she try next? Washing? How she shuddered at the thought. She looked at her hands. They were white and small, and but a year ago were almost covered with diamonds. She looked in the glass. Her beauty had faded. Alas! unhappiness is a worse blighter than time.

Poor little sad-eyed woman. From flattery and satins to dry bread and the wash-tub! What a change!

Washing was very, very hard for her, as she was not strong. But she could get enough of it to do to keep her from the sharp pangs of hunger. That was something.

One night, as she sat by her scanty fire after a hard day's work, her poor hands torn and bleeding by the pins the children would leave in their clothes, she thought of the past.

"Oh! if I had only been contented with the happiness I had—it seems a heaven to look back to—and had kept my dear baby, he would be a help to me now. He would not let his poor mother wash her life away, and my poor darling Harry would never have grieved himself to death. I should have been a happy wife, instead of a poor, lonely widow. But repentance comes too late." And the tears fell on her hand.

That, and a loud knock, aroused her. She rubbed her eyes. She had put the baby back and fallen asleep.

It is her own cosy little home; yes, and there's the cradle, and that's Harry's knock. Thank God! it is but a dream.

"Hal, Hal! Chub's not sold; here he is!"

And she dragged her husband to the cradle. "See him! And there's his little feet." And she pulled the covering off him, and kissed them so violently that he woke up with a laugh.

She caught him in her arms, then pulled Harry to the bureau. "See, there's his clothes. The lady hasn't got them; indeed she hasn't. There's shoes, stockings, shirts and all! You needn't die of grief. Hal, I'll never, never sell him."

"Why, Nell, what's the matter? Have you gone wild? Who want's to buy old nuisance?"

"Why, the lady. She took him away. Oh, Hal, I was

dreaming such a dreadful, dreadful dream. Let me see if my hair hasn't turned white."

And she looked into the glass, but the hair was as brown and curly as ever, and the eyes as roguish.

" You won't have to dye it yet, Nell. You liked to take my breath away. I thought you were getting a little—"

" But, Hal, the dream was so vivid that it seemed impossible for it to be anything but reality." And she told it to him, till he, too, lost his smile and looked pale.

" We'll value Chub all the more now, won't we, Nell?" and he kissed the little fellow; " and you wouldn't really sell him for half a million?"

" Not for twenty millions! Give me your love and my baby, and I would not change places with the richest woman in the world!"



## THE VAIN NASTURTIUM.



NCE upon a time a nasturtium grew in the garden of an elegant house, but its face was turned toward the great, great white wall, and as it did not look around, it saw no beauty in its life. But the wall was made of wood, and through the cracks the nasturtium could look into the back-yard of a neighbor's house.

"Ah, I should be happy if fate had only permitted me to grow there, the companion of those pretty rosy-cheeked children, and that busy, merry little woman."

So she looked and sighed, and the more the children laughed and the woman sang, the more discontented she became. But she never turned her head to see the beautiful flowers around her, or the stately house, or the lovely lady who swept like a queen down the gravel-walks.

"Oh, what a life to lead this is!" she cried, one warm summer's day; "this great bare wall, so white and blinding, always before me, with the reflected sun scorching my face, no tender hand to caress me, no loving eyes to admire my handsome dress. Ah! well, I wish I was dead and out of it!"

But one day, when the wind blew gently, she discovered, oh, joy! a knot-hole!

"Ah! now, now, if the kind wind will only assist me, I shall

have my wish!" Then she said in the sweetest voice she could command:

"Mr. Zephyr, will you be kind enough to blow very gently while I make a short journey?"

So the wind promised; but she soon found that the hole was too small, and her face came very near being cut by the sharp edge of the wood. Then Zephyr turned her gently and told her to try again. So she closed her eyes hard, as one having a tooth drawn; but finding she passed through unharmed, she opened them quickly, and in her surprise and delight she forgot even to thank the gentle Zephyr, who was standing hat in hand, waiting for it.

"Oh, what a pretty place! Look at the lovely green grass, and those pretty pink flowers, and those queer things in that cage; then how nice and cool it is, with no great, ugly, white wall before me!" So she danced and sang for very joy.

"Oh, mamma, mamma, see, see!" cried a soft, childish voice. "Oh, the pretty, pretty flower!"

How sweet this sounded to her ear; she felt she was pretty, but this was the first time any one had ever said so.

"Please, mamma, let me pick it?" and the little fingers were closed upon her slender stem, when she shrank back in terror; was her life that was just becoming so beautiful to be ended thus? But the mother's voice answered quickly:

"No, dear, let the pretty flower be; it looks so bright and lively, and will last a long time, if it is let alone."

"I love you ever so much, and you're a real pretty lady, a real lady!" cried the nasturtium. But the little woman did not understand flower talk, so was none the wiser for her good opinion. Soon a little baby, the one she had admired so, came toddling on the grass. Ugh! how near its little snatch-

ing hands came! She thought that distance lent enchantment there, at least.

“Ah! baby musn’t touch the beautiful flower; mamma likes to see it.”

Beautiful! She blushed at the word, till her yellow leaves became like velvet, and her stripes as black and shiny as a tiger skin.

The next morning, she opened her eyes bright and early. What a lovely sky! and see the dew-drops on her brother leaves!

“Ah! could I but once see myself!” she said, and bending gently so as not to disturb the little drop that nestled so round and bright in the center of a leaf, she saw her face.

“Am I not lovely?” she cried, and being so confused with vanity and pleasure, she jostled the leaf and shook the dew-drop, till she saw her beautiful form so horribly distorted that she drew back in fright.

“I won’t look in there again!” she said, with a sigh of relief, as examining her dress, she saw it was as beautiful as ever.

Now the children came again into the garden, and it was as much as little Hal could do to keep the baby’s fingers from destroying the now nervous, anxious flower.

“I don’t like baby one bit!” she said to herself, as Hal had caught his hand after he had given her a disagreeably tight squeeze.

“Children, don’t pick those flowers; they are coming out fast, and I want to pickle them when then are ripe,” called the little woman from the tub where she was washing out some little things for the baby, and an old towel or two.

“Pickle flowers! Why, mamma!” cried Hal, in incredulous astonishment.

"Well, not exactly the flower—ah, she was relieved again—"but the little seed that is left when the leaves fall off; they make very nice pickles, boiled in vinegar."

Oh, horror! was that to be her fate? When her beauty was gone—could it ever go?—she was to be thrust ignominiously into the pickle-pot! She shook in terror, and looked around for some way of escape; then for the first time she saw through the cracks and knot-hole the beautiful home she had left. No teasing children there; no frowsy, ugly woman hanging out ragged towels, and waiting impatiently to pop her into the detested pickle-pot!

"Ah! one never knows when they're well off," she cried; "but here I'll never stay, not if I—" and she thrust her head forward with all her might; but alas! she had grown too large, and the knot-hole tore her beautiful skin and bruised her shamefully.

"Never mind," she cried, winking the tears from her eye, "I am still the most beautiful flower here, with my velvet dress and yellow fringe. The most fashionable, too!" she added, almost crying.

"Oh, mamma! see how the wind has torn the poor flower. May I pick it? It's of no use."

She both loved and hated little Hal, as she waited breathless for the reply.

"Let me see," said the little woman, wiping her hands on her apron. Ugh! how they did smell of suds when they touched her. "No, no; I think it will still be good to pickle."

Ah! that hateful pickle-pot. Again and again she tried to thrust herself into her former home.

"I won't stay with those dirty-faced, ugly children, and that mean, stingy woman." But each trial only tore her coat afresh, and left her bruised and bleeding.

A storm came up; how thankful she was; how the rain-drops cooled her poor body—the rain that she used to despise; then when it cleared off, she saw the beautiful rainbow, and heard the delighted shouts of the children. A little puddle of water had settled beneath her, and she looked down. What was that ugly, ragged thing she saw? Surely not her beautiful self!

“Mamma, now may I pick the flower? See how broken it is; it is not pretty for you to look at any more,” cried Hal. The mother looked, and shook her head.

“Yes, it’ll never ripen now; it’s no use.”

“Thank goodness, I’ve escaped the pickle—” but before she could finish, the little hand closed tightly round and tore her from the stem; in a few moments she was dashed violently into the puddle with a contemptuous laugh!

“I don’t want the ugly old flower; it’s no use.” The water gurgled in her ears, then Hal’s little paddling feet crushed her into the mud, and she knew no more.

## THE SISTERS' PLEDGE.



IT was in "Merrie England"—that land of true homes, where families are large, and where the pleasures of domestic life are sufficiently attractive to keep the children there (at least for many years), and the head of the house indulges in a big easy chair, a newspaper, a game of chess, or whist, pleasant conversation, and an occasional game with the children, and is not perpetually absent at the "Lodge," but is a part of home, as the dear mother is, and inseparable in the mind of the wanderer from every picture of that loved spot—it was here, some Christmas ago, that six sisters, all in the pride of youth, health and happiness, made to each other a pledge, and this was their pledge:

"We, the undersigned, six sisters, do hereby pledge ourselves to either meet, six years from this date, at our old homestead, or to write our various life histories during that time, to be read to those assembled.

"BLANCHE,	EFFIE,
"EDWINA,	MADGE,
"LAURA,	MARY."

The six years had passed, and the evening appointed for the meeting had arrived. The old homestead was brilliantly

lighted, the father and mother in their accustomed places, the same dear father and mother, only a little grayer, a little nearer the other world. They waited for their six dear girls, or tidings of them, for, thank God, none were dead, and they had ceased to repine that no son had come to bless their love, and perpetuate their name; they only prayed for the happiness of their dear girls, and then to die at peace with all the world.

The bell rang, and Blanche entered in all her regal beauty. She received her parents' kisses with dutiful submission, but her nature was cold and calculating, and the loving mother stood almost in awe of her beautiful first-born. The bell again, and Madge, the light-hearted rattle-brain of the family, rushed into her parents' arms, and almost covered their faces with kisses, then gave Blanche a bear-hug.

"Why, Madge, one would think we had not seen you for years, instead of hours," reproved Blanche.

"Forgive me, lady queen," and Madge knelt, and kissed her hand in mock humility.

"Who have you received letters from, ma?" asked Blanche.

"From Effie and Laura, but have heard nothing of Mary, so I am in hopes of seeing the dear child, for she promised she would come or send, and she always keeps her word; yet we have not heard from her for so long that I fear—"

"Dear ma, don't fear anything till this night is over. You don't know at what hour she may come," and Madge kissed the tears away, that were just trembling on the dear eye-lids.

Again the bell rang, and Edwina, the demure little widow, entered with her two children, embraced her mother, and then gently kissed the others. Blanche's little girl came directly with her nurse.

The dinner hour was set for six o'clock, then the children

were told to go to the old nursery and amuse themselves, while their elders returned to the parlor, and, after those present had told their stories, the letters from the others were to be read.

The holly gleamed on the walls, and the mistletoe shone pale above the chandelier. The roast beef was large and juicy, the Christmas pudding in a flame and full of plums, the children delighted.

"If it was not for what is to come after dinner, I believe I should have liked a few cavaliers at this feast—for, you know, dear people, I'm the only marriageable lady of the party."

"You forget Edwina," remarked Blanche.

"Blanche!" said the sister alluded to, in a deprecatory tone.

"Beg pardon, Ed., for being so selfish; but you know I have to think of myself, as I am getting rather on the—the, as they say—"

"The old maid list, ma says," spoke up Regina, Blanche's only child.

"Regina!" and Blanche blushed with vexation.

"Oh, never mind; that's a good warning, Reggie. So I must hurry up, for I'm—let me see, nearly five and twenty. Good gracious! I shall soon be an old maid, sure enough!"

But underneath all the merriment there was a little anxiety, a little expectation perceptible. The dinner over, the children were sent to the nursery with Regina's nurse, and that young lady regaled them with numerous ghost stories till they were afraid to look around. But Regina imperiously demanded that the candles should be lit, as she didn't like only the fire-light, and when she was obeyed, the other children were greatly relieved; but the nurse said:

"Miss Reggie, I shan't tell you any more nice ghost stories, for they're nothing with the lights lit." But the little lady said:

"Well, tell us a love story, then, and I'll give you one of my ribbons."

So they heard all sorts of adventures, in which Miss Rose, as she told the other children, knowing they were poor, to call her, was the heroine.

In the cosy parlor, also decorated with holly and mistletoe, for Christmas in England would not seem like Christmas without them, sat the three sisters and their parents. They were so quiet that the ticking of the clock sounded loud, and the snap and crackle of the coal was heard.

"I suppose you are waiting for me to commence, as I am the eldest; but what is the use, you all know my history for all my life past, let alone the past six years."

"O, ho! Blanche, that won't do, or I shall not tell mine, and you don't know what you'll lose."

Blanche smiled sarcastically at Madge, and said: "Well, you all remember I was married just one year and a few days when we made that pledge; that I married well, and that my husband has continued to prosper in business; that I have everything that a lady could wish, and that my dear Regina was born nearly six years ago."

"And is that all your history for so many years?" asked Madge, disappointedly. "If I don't have any more romance than that after I'm married, I rather think I'll remain an old maid."

Could she have looked into her sister's heart, she would have seen that she married for money, only a mild respect for her husband taking the place of that deep affection which

alone makes a woman happy; that her love for her child was more pride of her beauty and cleverness than the affection, which is almost pain, that a mother feels who nurses her baby at her breast, and tends to all its little wants, watching it in sickness and in health, without the intervention of a nurse; that the void in her proud heart was filled with the love of dress, and making a grand display before the world; and Madge was right; for such a use of all the grand opportunities which God gives, is but a sorry working out of destiny. It is to famish at the richest banquet; to die of thirst sailing on the clearest stream.

After a pause, Edwina spoke:

"I was married nine years ago, to an American. My husband was good-natured and handsome, very entertaining, and a great favorite with the gentlemen. I loved him very much. When he had money he was most liberal, but sometimes we were unfortunate, but never really suffered; still we could save nothing; so that when he died a year ago, and left me with our two children, we suffered severely till my dear parents heard of it. We were in America at the time, where the people are kind and good, but very erratic; helping any one in distress one day, filling their larder to overflowing, but forgetting them on the next, some new interest attracting their attention. I tried to turn my little knowledge of painting to account, but found there was a great difference between the value and beauty of a picture that you give away, and the same thing when you try to sell it; so I reluctantly tried to color photographs, thinking, perhaps, it would be easier to gain a living by something that touched people's vanity than by appealing to their taste. But it was hard work; the proprietors of galleries expecting a large picture 'touched up,'

which really meant painted all over, for the meagre sum of a dollar and a half, and very small photographs, partially colored, for ten cents; and living was so dear that we had hard times, as they say in that country, till my dear parents sent me money to bring us back to England, where I am now doing very well."

Madge thought married life could not be so very fascinating after all. Yet Edwina had had her little romance. She had married for love, and had loved her husband till the last. Yet she was not blind to his faults, though she never spoke but kindly of him, and would not have allowed any one else to even think differently, if she could have helped it. He was, as she had said, a handsome, good-natured man.

He was desperately in love with her before marriage, but, like so many men, had ceased to be demonstrative after that interesting ceremony, and to a sensitive woman, who listens for a loving word, watches for a tender smile, or a half-unconscious pressure of the hand, and listens and watches in vain, it is but poor recompense to be told by the one almost worshiped that he is not demonstrative. Some men make a boast of their undemonstrativeness, and consider it quite a virtue, when it does more to lose them the love of their wives than drunkenness and gambling combined. Well, Edwina's husband was undemonstrative, or, in plainer words, selfish. He could have a larger audience of grown people to listen to his anecdotes and adventures at the "Lodge"—wherever that mysterious place may be—than with his wife and little ones; so to the "Lodge" he went, and so often that it was a mystery why he never became tired. When he did remain by his own fireside, and awake, the children were delighted, and listened in open-mouthed wonder to his lively stories, and the wife thought there was still something beautiful in life.

If the most trivial thing engrossed his attention at meal times he only thought of himself, and did not consider the keeping of those at home waiting and hungry for several hours of the least moment, and when remonstrated with about it, would reply:

“ Well, dear, eat; I am sure I would not go hungry with plenty to eat in the house.”

“ But it is not like home to eat our meals without you; I'd rather the dinner were ever so poor and you here, than the finest feast and you absent.” This should have flattered any man who looked beyond the gratification of the whim of the moment, who realized that his happiness was in his wife's keeping, that she could make home very uncomfortable if she was driven to, which many women are, when the husband, having had his own way so many years, thinks he is quite secure. And so they had lived for several years, the wife's enthusiasm gradually diminishing as the truth, the bitter truth, was forced upon her that the ecstatic love she bore him was completely thrown away; that he was better satisfied when she did not fret about him, and could bring herself to find her happiness outside of his society, so to leave him at peace to enjoy himself away from home.

Her little romance had been meeting an old sweetheart, for whom she had always cherished a kind regard; no matter how deeply she loved her husband, she was always pleased to see him, and he, noticing her careworn, anxious look, felt a tender pity, and when the husband invited him to the house, he readily accepted the invitation. He wished to see what troubled his dear little friend, and if it would be in his power to help her. During his first visit the husband had stayed at home, after his little boy had hunted him up; he was pleasant

and chatty, and the old sweetheart had liked him, and so he paid another visit shortly after; but the husband, after talking a little, yawned once or twice, then suddenly remembered he had an engagement. A very few visits showed that she was a neglected wife, and from pitying her, his old love soon returned; but she was so devoted to her husband that she kept him from saying anything, or acting in such a manner that should necessitate his discontinuing his visits. She had told him that her husband was good and kind, and that she loved him; but he looked at her in a peculiar way, and said:

“Yes, that’s the way the world thinks, at least the male portion of them, that if a husband gives his wife enough to eat, a roof above her head, and don’t beat her, he’s a model man; but I scarcely think that women really believe so in their hearts. They want a little of the attention they received before marriage. I don’t see why husbands think it of no consequence, when I’m wicked enough to believe that most men, outside of the husband, think married women as attractive as single ones, even a little more so.”

Edwina herself knew this was so, but she had always turned off the little complimentary speeches addressed to her, in a clever, witty way, so that she was never greatly annoyed, as some unready-witted women are.

Well, her husband was dead, and she had mourned as if her heart would break; but a few months after, the waiting, anxious look was gone, and she looked years younger; but she would not have acknowledged it even to herself, if she had looked fifty times in the glass; she would have considered it treason to her dear, dead husband, whom she had so, it seemed to her, hopelessly loved; but she knew where he was now, and could think of him as he was as a lover, or in the early days

of their married life. So, when the old sweetheart proposed, she said no; she could not marry yet; she did not believe she could ever love again, as she had her darling. Then she had gone home to her mother's. She did not live there now, her business forcing her to live at the other end of the city. And this was her real history, that she had told in those few prosaic words.

"Now, what does Laura say? Quick, ma, open the letter; I'm quite impatient," and Madge laid the two letters in her mother's lap.

But the letter was only the experience of a well-off person living on the continent, to whom the many scenes and objects of interest had become so common that she thought all the world were as tired of them as she was, and so described nothing. Only wrote of her elegant apartments in the Faubourg St. Germain, her dresses, the balls she went to, the plays she saw, and once incidentally mentioned her husband, and hoping they were all well, she sent them her best love.

Madge gave a sigh of relief, but Blanche said: "I'm glad dear Laura is so happy. It's a pity she had not one child; but, of course, she can't feel as I do, never having had any."

Then came Effie's letter; but we will watch Effie as she writes it, and read her heart at the same time.

The place is Liverpool; the scene, one room in a house of furnished lodgings; the occupants, a refined, delicate lady and her three children.

"Well, Eugene, to-day we must write that letter, and you know we don't want the others to pity us, or think hard of dear, dear papa, so we'll try and write a letter to make them happy, and almost envy us our home." But Eugene laughed

as he looked around the room, at the poor, faded, torn carpet, the broken, ugly furniture, the mutilated stove, and the curtainless windows; but he said, "Well, ma'ma, we'll try." So Effie wrote:

"DEAREST SISTERS: I cannot be with you, but according to our 'pledge' I write a letter-history of my life for a few years past. A month after our last eventful meeting, we moved to Bristol, where my darling husband soon became engaged in a remunerative business. Our home was a very happy one; our two little children the sweetest and best, we thought, that ever lived; my husband never a night away from his own ingle-nook, and my heart daily and nightly thanking God for my happiness. Some friends, all too officious, persuaded my pet—of course, you know who I mean—that this was the city for him and his talents, so we left our cosy little cottage, with the much-loved garden, the pretty roses, the lilies, the dear jelly flowers, and mignonette, with hearts all sad at the parting, but ambitious and full of hope for the future. Here we are living—well, I'll describe minutely: Our drawing-room—" But Eugene laughed and said:

"Oh! mamma," but she replied:

"Well, is not this our drawing-room? What other have we got?" Not receiving an answer, she wrote:

"Our drawing-room is carpeted with purple and green, the sofa of the most brilliant pattern of flowers." Eugene looked at the little second-hand lounge, that had been cut with a hatchet—so the woman said who sold it to Effie for less than one pound, her husband had so cut it during a quarrel—and sewed up, then at the miserable faded carpet, with the green scarcely visible, and the purple entirely gone, save underneath the furniture. "The chairs, brown, green and gold, and black."

"Oh, mamma! mamma!"

"Well, are they not? It is not necessary to say the green and gold is but a cane-seated chair, with a little gilt to set it off, costing two shillings at a second-hand shop, the brown ditto; and these, with the sofa, is all the furniture that belongs to us, and that we are thankful for even that. Those wretched black ones that belong to the landlady are almost paintless, but we need not say so."

"The pictures, rare and handsome." Rare they were, being two little ones painted many years ago by their dear mother, and a small print pasted on the wall and framed in silver-gilt paper, and not being removable, had been left there. The little pictures were really handsome, and the delight of the children.

"The rug, had it been paid for according to the value set on the work, of the costliest description; the design, a bird, flowers, etc."

"What! *that?*" and Eugene pointed to the unfinished rug, made of a coffee-sack, rags and carpet 'thrumbs.'

"Yes, exactly, dear, for I would not make another for ten pounds, unless it was absolutely necessary. Well, that will do for the drawing-room; now for the parlor—"

"But, mamma, we've got no parlor," said little Toots.

"This is the parlor, too, Toots, but I'll never mind the parlor; we'll go to the dining-room."

"But dis is de dawing-room, mamma," remonstrated Toots.

"Yes, Pet; and the parlor, dining-room, kitchen and bed-chamber, too, but we needn't make grandma unhappy about it." So she finished her letter, saying how very, very happy they were all; her dear husband never spending an evening away from home without her; and how all went each Sun-

day for a delightful walk down by the sea, watching the vessels, and her darling explaining all they saw to the dear children, both amused and instructed them. Then, the parks were another source of pleasure; the fountains, flowers, gayly-dressed people, merry children, they enjoyed it all. That at night, when all her loved ones were asleep and well, her heart overflowed with thanks to God for her happiness; and that she hoped they all were as happy as she, and that their circumstances were just what they wished.

She did not say how they were so poor that each little gleam of sunshine was hailed with joy, and made much of; how living was so dear that meat was precious, and stale bread, being so much less than fresh, was boiled in water, and, with a little milk and sugar, formed the desert, and often the supper, too; or how she did her own work, Eugene helping, only sending out the washing, and that to one of the kindest women, who helped her in many little ways, sending her a pot of butter, with the excuse that "she had so much," not wishing to hurt her feelings; or a loaf of cake, or something else; that her husband had been unfortunate, not being able to obtain a regular situation, so had to run in debt, and was harassed and troubled all the time.

Yet with all this trouble, Effie was happy; happy in her husband's love, happy in the affection of her children, and happy that they were all healthy, handsome and clever.

"Oh! mamma! you forgot to tell about our Christmas tree," exclaimed Eugene.

"So I did;" and she added a few lines, describing its beauties, and how delighted with it the children were. So they might be, for it stood them in place of a Christmas dinner, containing presents from aunts, cousins and grandmas. Poor

Effie could only put on home-made things, yet the children were satisfied, and didn't feel that they were at all poor; even the little fellow, almost a baby, said to Toots:

"I like Tanty Taus; Toots, don't oo?" And so the blessed Christmas came to them, God having them all in His own safe keeping.

"Well of all, my dear sisters, I believe I prefer Effie's lot," said Madge, after the letter was read, and they had sat silent for a moment.

"But Mary has not come, and it is now too late to expect her. Mary, my baby, my youngest; oh, I should never have let her go to that dreadful America."

"Don't reproach yourself, dear wife, she went to see Edwina. You know how we wrote to her to come home when her sister did; but she said no, she was on her road to make a fortune for us all. Poor child, poor child."

"We will hear from her soon, no doubt, dear father," said Blanche; "but now let us hear Madge's wonderful story."

"Well, I'm going to become an inventor."

"But that won't do," cried Edwina; "we must know what you have done, not what you are going to do."

"Oh, I've already made some inventions, in imagination, you know, not being mechanic enough to carry them out—there's that pepper-box."

"O! O! we all know everything about that," said Edwina.

"Then, there's the safety-switch for trains."

"Dress trains, dear?" asked Blanche, sarcastically.

"No; bother such trains, I don't wear them. Then I thought of a plow to deeper shallow rivers, making an embankment at the same time—"

"But, Madge, you are not telling your history," said her mother.

" Well, then, let me see—six years ago—that's such a long time to remember—where shall I start from?—oh, yes, my first real sweetheart, Willie—I won't tell his other name. Well, he was a little man, could play the accordeon beautifully! and could make the nicest little boxes and magical picture-books. Well, he married some one else, but I didn't cry my eyes out—then I had another sweet—"

" Well, we'll say you had a dozen—what next?" asked Blanche.

" You're rather severe on me, Blanche. After my sweethearts, I don't know what to tell you. You don't want to know how many tidies I knit, or how many I've sold, or how many slippers I worked. Oh! yes, the parties I've been to! Well, there was Augustina Smyth's ball, her birthday ball, you know—"

" I don't believe you have any history to tell, Madge," said Blanche.

" Well, I don't believe that I have. I suppose I must wait till I'm married, or become a great inventor; then the Queen will knight me, and I shall go abroad, and see and do all manner of wonderful things; then I shall have something to tell; now, I can only say that I live at home with my darling parents, sometimes staying a few days with my dear sisters; that I am very happy, and am going to become great, some day." And that was her history.

Now they all went to the drawing-room, and in a moment the Christmas tree was a blaze of light; and the children, coming in, shouted with pleasure. No one was forgotten, even to the pert nurse girl, and all were happy, save the poor mother, who longed for the presence of her " baby," her Mary. And Mary—

In one of the largest theaters of New York, a pretty ballet-girl had appeared for several months. Lately she had been given small parts, and acquitted herself well, had attracted some attention, especially that of one of the actors. He was a fine, handsome, manly-looking fellow, often playing heroic, noble characters. The girl had watched him in silent admiration for months, and when he spoke the first word to her, she blushed so deeply, and was so timid, that he was both amused and pleased. Well, the acquaintance ripened, till she almost adored the ground he walked on. La Violette, as the stage manager had put her on the bills, was a great reader, and being so madly in love, remembered every story where the woman had sacrificed herself to her heart's idol—Norma, Media and poor Heloise—and they were right, too, she thought. Why should a woman lose the man she worships? Oh! how noble he was. How grand! How magnificent!

She watched his every motion on the stage, and counted herself enviable in having such a lover; though, alas! she never expected to marry him. Oh, if she were only a great actress, if she could only play those characters that were loved by him, to whom he had to make such burning speeches, and of whom she was so madly jealous. At times how she suffered. The tortures of Dante's damned are pleasures to the excruciating pangs of jealousy, and this the poor girl felt. One night he had kissed her, just as he was about to rush on the stage, but she held his hand and said:

“One more, darling,” but he had jerked his hand away, and replied:

“I shall get to hate you;” then seeing her droop her head, and the tears fall unchecked, he said: “Oh, forgive me, I was cruel;” but too late, he had broken her heart. After this she

was so quiet, watching him with hungry eyes, but asking for no more kisses.

They were getting ready for the Christmas spectacle, and she was a fairy, and had learned a little dance, and made a beautiful dress, but all her spirit seemed gone.

Christmas night! The theater crowded, the spectacle magnificent, La Violette the sweetest fairy that ever trod the stage.

“ Dear little Pet, you are pretty to-night.” And her lover looked pleased. How thankful she was for those few little words.

Now the fairies were in a group, surrounded by many colored lights. La Violette and her lover, in golden lace armor, were to appear at the center, lit up with gorgeous green and red fires; but just before the time, they noticed the red fire, that was resting in a bottle near a scene, suddenly ignite, some one having removed the cork, not knowing the danger. In a moment the scene was in a blaze, the audience in an uproar, not to be quieted; the fairies jumped into the audience, and were saved, as the people were, with a few broken limbs. But the stage was like a furnace; every egress was cut off; and there stood La Violette and her lover, in a halo of flames..

“ Stay here one moment, and I will save you!” cried she. Gathering her clothes tightly around her, and beating her way with her other hand, she reached her room; then seizing her heavy woolen shawl, she plunged it in the bowl of water in which she had washed her face; then dashing the rest upon herself, she twirled the shawl around her hand, and shattered the large glass of the window; then rushing back, though bleeding profusely from the cruel gash cut in her unprotected

wrist, she threw the shawl over her lover's head, and seizing his hand, cried:

"Come! come! you shall be saved!" But the flames had so increased that they caught her dainty dress and flowing hair. Yet she dragged him to her room, and pointing to the broken window, showed him a roof, pulling off the shawl.

Oh, God! what a sight met his eyes. She had sunk upon the floor, blackened and bleeding, but still crying:

"Go, darling! quick, quick, by the roof! Oh, save yourself!" But he stooped and raised her gently in his arm, and wrapping the wet shawl about her, climbed with difficulty to the adjoining roof. There he rested for a moment, but she said:

"Kiss me, darling." And putting her poor arms about his neck, with that kiss she died. And this was Mary.

ESSAY  
ON THE  
MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN.

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FIRMNESS.

HE growing difficulty of the present day seems to be how to manage children properly. The problem would be easy of solution were we all not only believers in the science of phrenology, but were the science itself incontrovertibly true.

In a world of so many millions of inhabitants, no two of whom are alike—that is, of the civilized portion—what would be the best and proper means of managing one of the growing generation might be totally inadequate to compass the same end even with another child, of the same family; the means must necessarily be almost as varied as the dispositions to be controlled.

But there is one simple terse English word that, if rightly understood and properly applied, would render a parent's duty comparatively easy; the dissyllable is firmness.

Now this does not of necessity mean sour looks, cross words, or even the rod; but when once a command is given, see that

it is obeyed, no matter how much time, patience and trial of temper it takes; remember, one victory will prevent what would otherwise be a thousand subsequent defeats. One victory gained without loss of temper, and if possible without a blow, will increase the child's respect for his parents one hundred fold. Do not give a dozen orders in so many minutes; haste is not always speed; let each command be reasonable, and if possible, not entirely contrary to the child's natural instincts; for instance, to order a tender-hearted boy to kill a chicken, duck, or perhaps an animal, when it would be a fearful punishment for him, would be the utmost cruelty on the part of one whose position could compel obedience; it would plant the seeds of dislike, if not something worse, in the heart of the child against its parent. This is only an instance, which of course could be multiplied a thousand fold; but the object of the writer of this is to set parents to thinking more deeply of their children's individualities and the best way to secure their happiness, and with it their own.

Some children are born endowed with the perfection of amiable dispositions, to whom the parent's wishes are as imperative as their commands, who rarely quarrel, never fight; whose faces are always clean, and clothes irreproachable; these of course are easily managed; these are the good ones of the earth; but were they the sole occupants thereof, or even the majority, although the world would increase in morality, it would remain at a stand-still in regard to scientific developments and discoveries, and the progress of the arts and inventions. These are the moral balance of power, helping to cause the beautiful perfection of the whole.

The energetic boy who cannot keep a toy whole for two days, unless it is almost indestructible; the boy who is forever

patched about the knees; the boy who is insatiable for "happens," or as we say "facts;" the boy who will never fight with one smaller than himself, but who is ever ready to attack more than his peer in age and size, who is ever ready to defend the weaker or oppressed, whether human or brute, who is never still, and asks more questions than a philosopher can answer—this is the boy who becomes the lever of the world, moving it to mighty achievements; but he is also the boy hard to manage; terrible beatings, "breaking his spirit," supperless to bed—this is not the way. Study him closely, allow his inclinations a certain limit; if he goes beyond, or his active mind leads him into what you consider neither beneficial to his moral or physical development, then give your commands and see that they are obeyed; but do not expect a man's head on a boy's shoulders.

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## RESPECT TO PARENTS.

NEXT to firmness as a means for the proper management of children is the respect which each child should be taught to feel for its parents from its earliest infancy. Filial love is almost universal, but respect is often lacking. Mothers make a great mistake in sacrificing everything for their children, for it does not accomplish the end desired—that of increasing their happiness and goodness—but rather tends to render them selfish, disrespectful and egotistical. What respect can the daughter of to-day have for the mother who is continually untidy and drudging in the kitchen? The question: Why does she not help, thereby learning that labor is no indignity, and cultivating, by a more constant commun-

ion, a sympathetic appreciation for all that is good and beautiful in that mother's heart and life? is answered by the mother herself: "She has her studies." That mother should know that the studies will be easier, the sleep sweeter, the cheeks redder, if some time were spent each day in physical labor, and also that, being constantly seen doing the menial work of the house, the daughter will come to think that the kitchen is the mother's place, and finally be ashamed of her. To provide the best clothes always for the daughter or son, while the parents still wear the garments of several years ago, is another mistake. The mother should have the new dress first, and the father the new coat. Is not a boy happier if his mother is praised and admired when she visits him at school, even if he has a patch on his knee, than to be handsomely dressed himself and have the boys sneeringly ask, "Is that your mother?" The education of to-day is so brilliant that an uneducated parent is apt to jar unpleasantly on the nerves of the rising generation; therefore parents should educate themselves continually, to be at least the equal in intellect of their children—the master mind, if possible. Children should never be allowed to use a vulgar word or an expression in the presence of their parents which they would not be permitted to speak before others; nor should children witness at home the indulgence of vices which they are not expected to follow. What weight can the word of a drunkard have with his son, or the word of a constant swearer or a white liar? What good advice will be accepted from the mother who is constantly sending the little ones for her beer, or who is continually backbiting her neighbors? Neither should children see their parents engaged in any occupation or work in which the co-operation of those capable of assisting could not be conscientiously asked. In

the evening, especially, the parlor is the place for the whole family, parents included, not excluded, as is so often the custom, to the eternal detriment of the rising generation. A husband may be secured for the daughter by thus compromising him by the absence of the father or mother, but oftener a breach of promise case inaugurated. Let the children see and feel that their parents are the important ones of the house, the heads of the family. In a word, if the father and mother thoroughly respect themselves, the children will manifest the honor and respect for their parents which are so generally inculcated in religious teachings, but which are so seldom met with in the homes of the land. The children will do the same, thus making their management easy and a parent's duties the greatest pleasures of this life.

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## THE DUTIES OF PARENTS.

THE exercise of the perfection of any one quality alone will not insure the proper management of children. Their organizations are like the exquisite mechanism of a watch—each part for a different use, yet all necessary for the operation of the whole, each requiring the utmost care and attention, a grain of dust being capable of stopping the entire works. Each faculty and taste or inclination of the child must be studied, and the good ones encouraged to full development, the bad ones repressed, and later explained and, if possible, ridiculed into quiescence; for ridicule, being almost certain death to good qualities, should be also to evil propensities. If their minds alone are fed, the work will not be perfect. After the arduous studies of the day there should be a relaxation, with some

healthy, cheerful amusement. If they have performed their duties well during the hours devoted to school, it should not be necessary for the home hours to be spent poring over lessons. The teacher giving lengthy tasks, necessitating continual study at home, should be severely censured as not knowing his or her duty. It may be necessary for a few of the duller scholars to spend an hour or so in study outside of school, but this should be an exception to the rule. Practicing music in the evening is not a cheerful amusement, either to the performer or listener; but playing or singing is, and should often be indulged in. Even little boys are happier and gentler when they can sing or perform on some instrument. Nothing so strengthens the bonds of love in a family as singing together. It is one of the most charming memories of home. The scoffs and jeers of professors and philosophers against amateur musicians should be entirely ignored, remembering only the good that music does in a family.

Little informal gatherings of friends, young and old, with games, conversation, and even the simplest refreshment, help to make home attractive. Family visiting should be cultivated, and family excursions; the art galleries and things of interest should be seen together, for the stronger the bond is, the better and purer the children will be. Dancing should not be the only amusement; it is well enough once in a while, but all parties should not begin and end with the intellect of the feet. The early training of children should tend to render them when grown capable of those conversations that sometimes become historical, and are always worth listening to. The practice of locking up the parlor except for company is most pernicious, rendering the refining influence of pictures,

statuettes and books of little avail. No parlor should be too good or costly to render happier or better those most loved, and kept for the entertainment of those for whom we sometimes care so little. To cook, eat, and also exist in the kitchen, where a pleasant parlor is available, is not worthy a civilized being. But all careful supervision will be almost neutralized by the influence of one bad companion; therefore children should be often questioned in a pleasant, uninquisitorial way about their associates at school and their companions in their hours of play. Much future misery and shame may thus be spared; the evil habits being formed will thus be discovered, and can and must be nipped in the bud. One thoroughly bad boy or girl will vitiate the morals of the children of a whole neighborhood, and his or her detestable character must be pointed out, the ignominy to which it tends contrasted with the nobility of a purer life, and their hearts appealed to. A stern command that the association with such a one shall be immediately discontinued, without these good reasons given, is apt to increase the danger by rendering the forbidden companionship secret and more fascinating on that account.

Children between the period of school years and almost to maturity should not be supposed to remain ignorant of many of nature's laws, and therefore it is far better that they shall learn from the gentle lips of a mother, or the discreet conversation of a father, what will otherwise be taught them in a distorted and very undesirable way by some too precocious companion. Children should, then, be studied closely and supplied with healthy amusements, good companions and a sufficiency of work. To teach them it is not incompatible with dignity, so their hearts, minds and bodies should be brought as near perfection as possible, and then our good sense will accomplish the rest.

## WOMAN.

### PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.



STAND up in defense of my sex. I stand up to hurl the gauntlet of defiance into the face of that old octogenarian, the London Saturday Review. I stand up to defy the writers, young and old, rich and poor, male or female, who willfully and with malice aforethought, vilify the Present Woman.

The blushing, drooping modesty of a century ago was well enough for feudal days and feudal castles, when the faintest shriek from fair lips would summon a dozen knights errant and cavaliers to the distressed one's side; when a woman was only expected to look pretty and work embroidery; when mead ran in the cellar, and whole carcasses of beef hung in the pantry; when nothing more serious than the Troubadour's latest song occupied the fair one's mind; then, indeed, this blushing, drooping modesty was the fitting and expected characteristic of the sex that then dared hardly raise their eyes to the faces of their lords.

But in this rushing, bustling world, a woman is considered as good as another man, to fight the battle of life, but not to have quite as good a right.

Why, I've seen a little woman just out of a sick bed, and not tall enough to reach the strap, stand during a long ride in

a street car; she had as much right to stand as a healthy man, and she did. Her blushing, or rather pale modesty, didn't help her much. I've seen these delicate creatures—whom the writers of the day deplore as having lost the blushing aforesaid—nearly pushed into the gutter, to make way for a strong man; they had just as good a right to get their dainty feet muddy as he; in fact, I've felt the hard elbows in my own side, and never even pushed back in retaliation; but I've ground my teeth and thought naughty things.

It's all very pretty to read about this drooping modesty, and occasionally would light up well as a picture, with damask and lace curtains as a background, and a hanging lamp and handsome young man as auxiliaries; but for practical use in this work-a-day world we want just such women as we have got—hard-headed, and hard-handed, too, sometimes, with a dogged determination to hold their own even against a thousand male competitors.

I will tell you some facts to support my arguments. In Philadelphia, in the year 187—, there were two lady engravers, and but two who made it a profession, so I was told, in the whole city. One of them I knew; she worked for years illustrating Godey's Lady's Book, and her work was as good as that in any contemporary magazine; but the male engravers—I will not call them men—determined that those two women should not be competitors, even if they had to do the work for that magazine for nothing; so they underbid and underbid them, till at last they got their wish, and years of faithful service was forgotten in that goodly city, because the stronger sex wanted no women rivals, so would work cheaper—at least till they got rid of them.

Then, again, one of these ladies was for years the teacher of

engraving in a school of design; a man came and offered to teach for nothing; magnanimous creature! and the female—shaming her sex—who conducted the establishment accepted the offer. How long he taught for nothing after this gallant action is not hard to surmise.

Will the London Saturday Review, and the thousand and one other howlers, please tell us what retiring, modest simplicity would have accomplished in these cases? Perhaps a deluge of tears, or a few fainting fits, would have softened these male creatures' hearts, and the weak sisters would have been permitted to earn their own living in peace; but we doubt it. And such are the people and circumstances women have daily to encounter in this weary struggle for existence. Is it not enough to rub the blush and bloom off beauty's cheek, to harden the native delicacy of her feelings, to make her try to educate herself as man to meet man?

This is all very well, you may think, for the working class; but this is a great class. Watch the streets of a large city at six p. m., near the manufactories, and you will be surprised to see the crowd of girls and women, with their little baskets and bundles; then there are thousands who do not go in crowds, from the photograph galleries, the counters, the school-rooms, the theaters, the printing-offices, the opera-singers, the servant girls, and our poor, poor despised saloon-waiters and singers.

One-half of this vast army have been as delicately brought up as the blushing-modesty people could wish; but they soon find that actual life is somewhat different from romance, and that the Don Quixotes are, alas! all dead; that the prizes are for those that can battle the hardest, and not for the retiring, easily vanquished, humble woman. Is it a wonder, then, that

their air is a little more defiant than may be desirable, or their voice a shade louder, or their lives more independent?

I despise the girl or woman who is always looking out for an insult, and can make a double *entendre* of every little joke that's uttered. I've seen such; these are the horsewhipping, cowhiding kind. I've seen that, too, in one of the largest of Eastern theaters, where the women screamed, "Don't let him hit her," when the "he" apparently had no intention of doing anything but hold the infuriated woman's arms. I thought her blushing modesty deserved a right smart beating in return.

I've heard of the blushing kind replying to the remarks of strangers, and then when one shows pretty plainly what he thinks she is, she is indignant and calls on her big brother, or avenges her own honor in some public place. Had she walked on with her eyes before her, attending to her own affairs, in a sensible, business way, not trying the game of dropping eyelids and faltering footsteps, to be admired as so unsophisticated! she could go through the world without one insult, or many occasions to do blushing either.

We want to know where the women of to-day have so deteriorated that all these cries should be raised against them; can't they do as much as they ever did? Aye, a thousand times more! Look how many women support their families, or help their husbands to do so, or provide for a mother, or dependent little sisters and brothers! in so many different branches of industry, too, that a few years ago were sealed books to women.

Letters from the great exposition tells of some good inventions emanating from female brains. One, a fire-proof building material, which, if it be all that is claimed, will prove a

valuable epoch in the world's history. In our own little fair here, women made their presence known with their sweet tar-drops, and their hair-restorer; and who will deny the palm to a woman for the boon of all boons—at least most married men think so—Mrs. Winslow's soothing syrup? How many a night would the masculine rest be broken, the peaceful dreams annihilated, the morning nap disturbed, had not kind Providence permitted the woman Winslow to be born and bred!

Education, too, is more universal than it ever was before; and as for the modesty in dress, no one who looks at a lady's magazine of fifty or sixty years ago will pretend that our dear ancestors set us an example that could be followed without the greatest scandal in these, according to their cry, degraded days. A petticoat or gown of the scantiest pattern, showing foot, ankle, shape and bosom; a net-work of pearls or gold braid covering the whole, until the extravagance was prohibited by a decree from the throne. I've seen the book—tiny slippers, long white gloves, a few short, fleecy curls, and a lady was in full dress for court or ball.

And they cry, too, so much about a woman's make-up; this is of nonsense the very sheerest. In the car, the other day, of all the women there, some eight or more, I could almost take my—I was going to swear! oh, my!—that not one was the least made up by pad or bustle, hair or jute, paint or powder, except the little that perhaps remained on my face, and that the great majority of women are likewise as nature made them.

Those that are made up, what does it amount to? A little cotton where nature has been illiberal, a newspaper to give the dress a proper set, and a little powder to soften the effect of tan or freckles. There are a few exceptions to the rule,

of course, but not enough to warrant the conclusion that we are all going headlong to the —.

These very croakers would smile sweeter, and raise their hats higher, to a pretty woman, even if they knew that art helped to make her a joy forever, than they would to rusty, dusty simplicity, with a drooping head and a giggle.

I can imagine drooping, blushing modesty changed into a wife of to-day; after the first three weeks her husband would tell her she was a fool to be so sensitive, and not to blush whenever a person looked at her, as if she was ashamed of herself; and ten to one, she would have to gird up her loins for a good day's washing before many months were over, if she had not the spirit to say "I shan't!" and stick to it.

I don't deprecate modesty, mind me, but maintain that the women of the present day are as modest as is necessary to good sense; in fact, as modest as they ever were.

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